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THE HUNT IN MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCE:
A STUDY IN TRADITION AND INFLUENCE

by



ANTHONY FLEMMING-BLAKE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for
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A STUDY IN TRADITION AND INFLUENCE submitted by
ANTHONY FLEMMING-BLAKE in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

The medieval hunt was a popular pastime which, if legal and cynegetic records are correct, was followed passionately by medieval nobility. This study explores the influence of metaphysical schematizations on the sport and its use in Middle English literature. The investigation begins by showing the uniqueness of the hunt as an institution. The first chapter surveys the legal and cultural concerns influencing the activity. Forest laws made the activity a noble preserve which the intricate observances of the pastime upheld by making it difficult for the uninitiated to participate; both areas, of forest law and etiquette, combined to produce a recreation heavily imbued with exactitude and order. The fact that two animals most often hunted, the deer and the boar, are given Christian allegorization, even in a hunting manual, affects the appearance of deer and boar hunts in literature.

The two central chapters investigate deer and boar hunts, mainly in romance. Earlier cultural associations of the deer were easily accommodated in Christian allegory, allowing the animal to serve as a guide. However, Celtic and Germanic admiration for the boar's natural courage, though continuing to provide apt boar similes for brave heroes, was supplanted by a Christian viewpoint that saw the creature as evil. Positive allegorization of the deer hunt with the Christian life, and the highly ordered method of par force hunting, led to the activity being used in literature to depict, reveal, or help establish order. Negative allegorization of the boar, in which

its natural characteristics caused it to be compared with sinners and the Anti-Christ, led to denigratory treatment in later medieval literature, where the animal is associated with several of the Seven Deadly Sins. In addition boar hunts are associated with disorder; the animal itself is the centre of disorder, or else its appearance heralds a disturbance of human provenance.

The final chapter discusses the three hunts in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Departing from convention, the Gawain-poet puts the pastime to different imaginative uses. The deer hunt leaves one with an impression of slaughter rather than order, while the boar chase is described in Germanic terms with attention focused on the plight of the unfortunate animal. The third hunt, after the fox "Reniarde," carries strong connections with dissemblance and cunning. The three animals hunted symbolize the main human, or quasi-human, characters in the romance: the deer, the Arthurian court; the boar, Gawain; and the fox, the world of Morgan. Finally, the name of Sir Bercilak echoes the name of a hunting hound, the bercelet, which flushed out or retrieved game for a hunter, a part played by Sir Bercilak for Morgan in the metaphorical hunt in the poem.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUMLA. Australian Universities Modern Languages Associations.

ELH. Journal of English Literary History.

PMLA. Publications of the Modern Language Association of
America.

INTRODUCTION

The English medieval hunt has received little attention in either cynegetic or literary research in English. The former is being redressed by Bror Danielssen, who is at present publishing a series of twelve volumes, The Medieval English Hunt: Cynegetica Anglica (Stockholm, 1977). Danielssen asserts that the series will provide the basic materials for a better understanding of the hunt in Medieval England, by furnishing clues to hunting terms and metaphors in later English literature.¹ Volume One in the series, an edition of William Twiti's The Art of Hunting (1327), published in 1977, is used in this study. The next volume pertinent to the chase rather than falconry, a critical edition of Edward, Second Duke of York's The Master of Game (ca. 1406) has not yet been published; therefore, the London, 1909 edition of the work, edited by William and F. Baillic-Grohman has been used. Besides Danielssen's series, Rachel Hands' English Hawking and Hunting in the Boke of St. Albans (Oxford, 1975) is a welcome critical edition of the cynegetic sections of The Boke of St. Albans (1496), one of the first books to be printed in England. French hunting manuals to which the English form of the sport owed a great debt are more numerous. Two of these manuals, Le livre de la chasse (1387) by Gaston Phoebus and Les Livres du roy Modus et de la royne Ratio (ca. 1338) are cited in this study, the former because of its popularity and because it formed the basis of Edward, Duke of York's The Master of Game, the latter on account of its influence and the Christian allegorizations of the animals that it contains.

Books concerned specifically with the Medieval English hunt,

other than hunting manuals, do not appear to be many. George Wingfield Digby has a section devoted to the sport in Devonshire Hunting Tapestries (London, 1971). A German work, Paul Sahlender's Englische Jagd, Jagdkunde und Jagdliteratur in 14., 15. und 16 Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1895) is not extant; Danielssen questions whether it was ever published.² In addition to hunting manuals, legal records of Medieval England provide much information on how the sport was practised and how it influenced the lives of people. G.J. Turner indicates this influence in his introduction to Select Pleas of the Forest (London, 1901), a work based on legal records of the Forest in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Gunnar Brusewitz's Hunting: Hunters, game, weapons and hunting methods from the remote past to the present day (New York, 1969) and Michael Brander's Hunting and Shooting: From earliest times to the present day (New York, 1971) are historical surveys which include sections on medieval hunting, with Brander paying more attention to the chase in England. Most books that purport to deal with the English hunt invariably concentrate on that symbol of things English, the fox hunt of the past two centuries.

A similar dearth of research exists in the area of the Medieval English hunt in literature. One dissertation, once again a German work, Die Jagd in den Mittelenglischen Romanzen (Kiel, 1910) by Kurt Borchers, lists references to hunting or to accoutrements of the chase found in Middle English romance.³

Animal symbolism, an area of study that informs the medieval hunt in Middle English literature, has received recent critical

attention. Beryl Rowland's Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World (Kent, Ohio, 1971) and Animals with Human Faces (Knoxville, 1973) along with Marcelle Thiébaux's The Stag of Love (Ithaca, 1974) contribute much to an understanding of medieval animal lore.

In periodical material, Marcelle Thiébaux's "The Medieval Chase" (Speculum, 42. 1967, pp. 260-274) and "The Noble Art of Venery" (The Saturday Book, 26, 1966, pp. 130-146) with Henry Lyttleton Savage's "Hunting in the Middle Ages" (Speculum, 8. 1933, pp. 30-41) are the chief articles that deal with the sport in general.⁴ Other articles such as Russell A. Peck's "The Careful Hunter in The Parlement of the Thre Ages (ELH, 39. 1972, pp. 333-341); Louis Blenkner's "The Three Hunts and Sir Gawain's Triple Fault" (American Benedictine Review, 29. 1978, pp. 227-246), or Oliver Farrar Emerson's "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting" (Romanic Review, 13. 1922, pp. 115-150) concentrate on the use of the hunt in one work or the works of one author.

As far as I can ascertain, there has never been any attempt to analyse the imaginative uses to which the chase was put in Medieval English literature. The Hunt in Middle English Romance attempts to fill something of the gap. Chapter One examines the chase as it was practised by Medieval English nobility, many of whom brought with them from Normandy a passion for the pastime. The chapter discusses some of the deleterious consequences of Forest Law imposed by William of Normandy and his successors on large parts of England. The discussion also shows the extraordinary degree of planning and knowledge of intricate terminology and procedure demanded by the sport.

Further discussion centres on a religious argument between ecclesiastics and hunters, and records the religious influence in some hunting manuals that extends to the tropological association of the deer with Christ and the boar with the Anti-Christ. Chapter Two studies the appearance of deer and deer hunts in Middle English literature, suggesting that the allegorical association of the animal with Christ influences the use of deer hunting in literature to depict either a world at peace, or leads a hero into a realm of adventure where he reestablishes order. The sport's implicit association with order is further emphasized in Sir Tristrem and The Lyfe of Ipomydon, in which the deer hunt is used to reveal a hero's correct place in the medieval social hierarchy. In The Parlement of the Thre Ages, the protagonist is led through deer hunting with its associations of earthly order into a dream-vision in which inescapable universal order is impressed on him. Chapter Three concerns itself with the boar and boar hunting. The first part of the chapter shows the dramatic change that the moral image of the boar underwent in medieval Europe. Seen by Germanic and Celtic peoples as a courageous beast, its image was a manifestation of defensive magic; however, in medieval European literature "whose principal concern was triumphant Christianity"⁵ the animal was associated with several of the Seven Deadly Sins and often represented a Satanic force. Both streams of influence are seen in Middle English literature as the second half of the chapter investigates hunts in such works as Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Eglamour of Artois and The Avowyng of Arthur in which heroes battle

particularly loathsome boars. The chapter closes with the suggestion that the animal was also linked implicitly with treachery and misfortune, yet further aspects of disorder. Chapter Four considers the three hunts in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. After reviewing the main critical theories concerning the connection between the hunts and the bedroom scenes that they enclose, the discussion turns to the inextricably connected moral, aesthetic and cultural reasons for the use of the chase. A knowledge of the complexities of the sport and its use in other Middle English works reveals some of the Gawain-poet's craft in his innovative treatment. The kinds of animals hunted, the type of hunt conducted, and the ultimately announced name of the hunter all are significant in an understanding of the work.

CHAPTER ONE
THE MEDIEVAL HUNT

It is difficult to imagine the zeal with which hunting was pursued in medieval Europe. It was a pastime that occupied the time and energy of the medieval noblemen to an extraordinary degree. Looked upon as a privilege and duty, it had to be followed seriously. As medieval life grew more stable with disputes and local skirmishes becoming less frequent, knights, reared on a diet of combat, turned to tournaments and hunting. The hunt afforded the life and death struggle of war without its cost in human life. The exercise expended in the pastime was also valuable in keeping men fit and ready for the great battles between the newly emerging nation states.¹

For many medieval noblemen the hunt became a passion. Nobody exhibited more enthusiasm for the sport than Gaston III (1331-91), Count of Foix and Bearn. Known as Gaston Phoebus on account of his long flowing yellow hair, he lived in his castle at Orthez (in Aquitaine near the Pyrennes) surrounded by hundreds of the best obtainable hunters and a large number of hunting hounds of various descriptions. Hunting was often as dangerous as war. Gaston Phoebus' grandfather was killed while stag-hunting and his brother died as a result of fighting a bear; Phoebus himself died, as he probably would have wished, after a day's hunting at the then ripe age of sixty. Phoebus demonstrated his love for the hunt in the Livre de la Chasse. Though the book incorporated much of an earlier hunting manual, Le Roy Modus, it is an original work, giving a detailed picture of the hunting practises then adhered to in Europe.² Phoebus was a kinsman of the Plantagenet kings of England

who ruled Aquitaine in the early fifteenth century. One of Phoebus' kinsmen was Edward, Second Duke of York, who, in 1401 ten years after Phoebus' death, became Lieutenant of Aquitaine. In 1405 Edward translated Livre de la chasse into English, since few nobles at the time were able to read French. Edward was evidently fascinated by Phoebus' work which he translated into English while confined in Pevensey castle in 1406. In Edward's work, entitled The Master of Game, some chapters of Phoebus' work are omitted, while certain additions concerned with English hunting practices are made.³

Though there were some difference between hunting in England and France in the early fifteenth century, French methods of hunting and game preservation prevailed. William of Normandy was himself a keen hunter and took steps to guarantee that he and his heirs would enjoy the sport for years to come. He increased the royal preserves of the Saxon kings; these preserves were then maintained and extended by his successors so that the English kings could be assured of a day's sport wherever they travelled.⁴ William's passion for hunting and his subsequent appropriation of large areas of forest and common land is recorded with a certain degree of hostility by the writer of the Laud manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles. Part of the entry for the year 1086 reads:

Se cyng waes swa swiðe stearc and benā of his under
 ƿeoddan man, manig marc goldes. and mā hundred punda
 seolfres. Ðet he nā be rihte, and mid mycelan ūnrihte
 of his leode. for littelre neode. he waes on gitsunge
 befeallan and graedinaesse he lufode mid ealle. he
 saette mycel deor frið and he laegde laga ƿær wið
 ƿ swa hwa swa sloge heort oððe hinde. hine man
 sceolde blendian. he forbead ƿa heortas. swylce eac
 ƿa baras. swa swiðe he lufode ƿa hea deor swilce he
 waere heora faeder. eac he saette be ƿā haran. hi
 mosten freo faran. his rice men hit maendon. and a
 earne men hit beceōrdan. ac he swa stið. he ne rohte

heora eallra nið. ac hi moston mid ealle
 pes cynges wille folgian
 gif hi woldon libban oððe land habban
 land oððe eahta. oððe wel his sehta.
 Wala wā ðaenig man sceolde modigan swa.
 hine sylf upp ahebban. and ofer ealle men
 tellan.
 So aelmihtiga God cypae his saule
 mildheortnisse.
 and do hī his synna forgifenesse.⁵

Dorothy Whitelock provides a vigorous poetic translation:

The king was so very stark
 And deprived his underlings of many a mark
 Of gold and more hundreds of pounds of silver,
 That he took by weight and with great injustice
 From his people with little need for such a deed.
 Into avarice did he fall
 And loved greediness above all.
 He made great protection for the game
 And imposed laws for the same,
 That who slew hart or hind
 Should be made blind.

He preserved the harts and boars
 And loved the stags as much
 As if he were their father.
 Moreover, for the hares did he decree that they
 should go free.
 Powerful men complained of it and poor men
 lamented it,
 But so fierce was he that he cared not for the
 rancour of them all,
 But they had to follow out the king's will
 entirely
 If they wished to live or hold their land,
 Property or estate, or his favour great.
 Alas! woe, that any man so proud should go,
 And exalt himself and reckon himself above all
 men!
 May Almighty God show mercy to his soul
 And grant unto him forgiveness for his sins.⁶

The areas of land that William and his successors had designated
 as hunting preserves were subject not only to the common law of the
 land but also to a special Forest Law. Villages and hamlets often
 lay within the boundaries of Forest Law, a fact which caused their

inhabitants extra hardships; consequently, there was a natural resentment against this body of law because of the double burden that it imposed on those who lived within its jurisdiction.

Inhabitants of villages lying within Forest Law not only had to attend ordinary courts of law and maintain the ordinary officials of the shire, but they also had to attend courts and assemblies of Forest Law and keep on good terms with those who administered it. Forest Law did not supersede but merely supplemented the ordinary law of the land.⁷ Therefore, in medieval England the word "forest" designated not so much a wooded area as a tract of land where the added restrictions of Forest Law prevailed. Since the object of such a law was the preservation of animals in natural surroundings, everything within its jurisdiction was left in as natural a state as possible; thus, even the gathering of wood for kindling was an infringement.

To enforce such far-reaching laws required the effort of many retainers, of whom the best known were the foresters. Legal records of medieval England leave no doubt that foresters were kept busy battling the intruders and trespassers in the king's forests. A typical encounter between foresters and poachers in the Bailiwick of Stanion, Northamptonshire, in 1246, is recorded in the "Inquisitions Concerning the Venison in the Forest of Huntingdon."

Accidit die Mercurii in crastino apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi anno rengni regis Henrici tricesimo quod, cum Willelmus de Northampt' et Rogerus de Tyngewyc de placitis de Stanerne uersus placita de Salcet' iter arripuissent, datum fuit intelligi prenominitis W. et R., quod bersatores fuerunt in landa de Banifield cum leporariis ad malefaciendum de venacione domini regis.

Et cum predicti W. et R. ad landam peruenissent et ibidem insidiando expectassent, Iacobus de Turleber, forestarius eiusdem balliue et Matheus frater eius, forestarius in parco de Bricstok', uenerunt cum forestariis peditibus ad mandatum predicti W. de Norhtampt'; et viderunt quinque leporarios, quorum vnus erat albus, alius niger, tercius fauus, quartus niger coueratus fugantes bestias, quos dictus W. et R. ceperunt. Quintos, uero, leporarius teyngre euasit. Et cum predicti sub foresta redierunt a capcione leporariorum insidiando viderunt quinque bersatores in dominico domini regis de Wydehawe, vnum cum balista, et quatuor cum arcubus et sagittis stantes ad fusta sua. Quos cum forestarii percepissent, exclamauerunt eos et eos prosecuti fuerunt. Et predicti malefactores ad fusta sua stantes turnauerunt in defensum et in forestarios sagittas suas direxerunt, ita quod wlnuerunt Matheum forestarium de parco de Bricstok' cum duabus sagittis waliscis, scilicet cum vna sagitta sub mamilla sinistra ad profunditatem vnus palme de belongo et cum alia sagitta in brachio sinistro ad profunditatem duorum digitatum, ita quod de uita dicti Mathei desperabatur. Et forestarii predictos malefactores tam uiriliter prosecuti fuerunt, quod malefactores in fugam conuersi sunt in spissitudine bosci. Et forestarii propter noctis obscuritatem amplius eos prosequi non potuerunt.⁸

(It happened on Wednesday the morrow of the apostles Philip and James in the thirtieth year of the reign of king Henry that when William of Northampton and Roger of Tingewick were on their way from the pleas of Stanion to the pleas of Salcey, the before-named William and Roger were given to understand that the poachers were in the lawn of Beanfield with greyhounds for the purpose of doing evil to the venison of the lord king. And when the aforesaid William and Roger had reached the lawn and were waiting there in ambush, James of Thurlbear, forester of the park of Brigstock, came with the walking foresters on the order sent by the aforesaid William of Northampton. And they saw five greyhounds, one of which was white, another black, the third fallow, a fourth black covered, hunting beasts, which greyhounds the said William and Roger took. But the fifth greyhound which was tawny escaped. And when the aforesaid William and Roger returned to the forest after taking the greyhounds, they lay in ambush and saw five poachers in the lord king's demesne of Wydehawe, one with a crossbow and four with bows and arrows standing at their trees. And when the foresters perceived them, they hailed and pursued them. And the aforesaid malefactors standing at their trees turned in defence and shot arrows at the foresters so

that they wounded Mathew, the forester of the park of Brigstock, with two welsh arrows, to wit with one arrow under the left breast, to the depth of one hand slantwise, and with the second arrow in the left arm to the depth of two fingers, so that it despaired the life of the said Mathew. And the foresters pursued the aforesaid malefactors so vigorously that they turned and fled into the thickness of the wood. And the foresters on account of darkness of the night could follow them no more.)⁹

Forest Law required that every time a beast of the forest was found dead or wounded, an inquiry had to be held. Neighbouring towns and villages had to send representatives to the inquiries. A perusal of G.J. Turner's Select Pleas of the Forest shows that many towns were reluctant to answer the summons. The following example shows how many of these inquiries fared:

Presentatum est per forestarios et viridarios quod quedam bestia capta fuit sub Wauberg' cuius intestina inuenta fuerunt in parco sub Wauberg' per forestarios pedites, scilicet, Robertum de Skipton' et Ricardum le Waleys. Inquisicio facta fuit per villatas propinquiores Alcumbir', Wolfle, Elinton' et Brampton' qui nichil aliud inde sciunt. Et quia villate non venerunt etc.; ideo in misericordia.¹⁰

(It is presented by the foresters and verderers that a certain beast was taken at Weybridge, of which the entrails were found in the park at Weybridge by the walking foresters, that is to say Robert of Skipton and Richard the Welshman. An inquisition was made by four neighbouring townships, Alconbury, Woolley, Ellington and Brampton, who know nothing else thereof; and because the townships did not come.; therefore they are in mercy.)¹¹

A reading of the numerous inquiries cited by Turner shows that the confessed ignorance of the townships of Alconbury, Woolley, Ellington and Brampton and their failure to send representatives to the inquiry was not unusual.

As part of the large civil service formed to enforce Forest Law, William of Northampton and Roger of Tingewick were deputy wardens or stewards whose duty it was to attend the various courts of the forest.¹² The day to day work within the forest was performed by two types of foresters, the riding foresters and the walking foresters such as Robert of Skipton and Richard the Welshman. The wardens employed the foresters and were responsible for paying them; however, it was often the foresters who paid the wardens for the privilege of office. Graft and bribery were rampant in such a system. The foresters, who paid the wardens an annual fee, in turn collected their own remuneration from the inhabitants of the forest through various acts of extortion which were claimed as customary rights. The oppression that resulted from the system of farming out the office of forester is well illustrated in the list of grievances presented by the men of Somerset to an inquisition in 1277. The list of complaints includes the appointment by the chief forester of more foresters than were necessary, the exaction of money from the forest's inhabitants for their appointment, and the collection of corn, lambs, and young pigs by the foresters at the expense of the forest dwellers. As Turner states, this extortion was more resented by the people than the actual restrictions on hunting or woodcutting that were imposed by Forest Law.¹³

The animals of the forest were categorised into different classes. The beasts of venery, or Beasts of the Forest as they were sometimes called, composed the highest class; then came the beasts of the chase and finally those animals classified as vermin.

The animals included in the various classifications changed according to time and place. For example, the hare was preserved as a beast of the forest in the forest of Somerton but apparently nowhere else.¹⁴ The reasons for classification have caused some debate. Turner assents that the animals were grouped according to the amount of protection received,¹⁵ while Brander states that the essential reason for classification lay in the way that the animals were hunted. Brander, relying evidently on Gunnar Tillander's explanation for the groupings,¹⁶ states that the beasts of venery were found with a lymer, a specially trained tracking hound, and hunted with the pack, while the beasts of the chase were found and hunted by the pack without assistance from a lymer.¹⁷

Nobody could hunt legally in the lands under Forest Law unless he had been given the right to do so by the king himself. Grants given to the nobility, and at times to the clergy, varied. Usually a grant to hunt the Beasts of Venery was given outside a royal forest, whereas grants were made to hunt beasts of chase within the forest.¹⁸ Since royal grants were given mainly to the nobility, the sport became the prerogative of the well born. However, though they could not initiate a chase, the lower classes were not totally excluded from the pastime. Many roles were filled by people from the lower ranks of society. When a hunt was in progress it involved a number of people. There had to be crowds to shout and drive the animals in desired directions, and many people were needed to perform such chores. The hunt also provided opportunities for advancement. A boy might have begun his

association with the hunt as a beater and then after a period of apprenticeship have won his way to the post of dog-varlet; eventually, having proven himself in lesser roles, he could rise to the position of huntsman.¹⁹ Though the huntsman was not the leader of the hunt, nevertheless he had a very important part to play. His responsibilities are described by Edward, Second Duke of York in The Master of Game:

. . . when the sun is arisen, he [the huntsman] shall see fresh dew upon the small twigs and grasses, and the sun by his virtue shall make them shine. And that is great joy and liking to the hunter's heart. After when he shall go to his quest or searching, he shall see or meet anon with the hart without great seeking, shall harbour him well and readily within a little compass. It is great joy and liking to the hunter. And after when he shall come to the assembly or gathering, and he shall report before the Lord and his company that which he hath seen with his eyes, or by scantilon (measure) of the trace (slot) which he ought always of right to take, or by the fumes (excrements) that he shall put in his horn or his lap.²⁰

The huntsman's job was particularly important in the method of hunting introduced into England by the Normans. Instead of driving the game towards waiting hunters, the Normans delighted in hunting par force or "by strength." This involved hunting a particular animal on horseback and with hounds across a considerable stretch of country. The earlier Saxon method of hunting with hayes or hedges (which were funnel shaped plantations through which the animals were driven to waiting hunters²¹) survived to a degree in the medieval hunt with stables. In the hunt "with bows and stable" the hunted animals were driven towards stables or stands where the hunters stood with cross-bows or long-bows.²²

The par force hunt after a beast of the forest was a complex and highly organized affair. It is the form of hunting that is given most attention in both the hunting manuals and the romances of the period. Though the details of this type of hunt vary according to time and place, the general outline of the activity remains the same. After a particular animal had been located or "harboured" by the huntsman, the hunt proceeded with the unharbouring of the game; that is, the animal was driven from its lair. Like the harbouring of the animal, the unharbouring also demanded a great deal of skill in woodcraft. A lymerer, accompanied by a scenting hound or lymer, would seek out the animal and start it from its resting place. The lymer was no particular breed of hound, but was one that was specially trained to scent out animals without making any noise that might disturb them; thus, the exact location of the game would be discovered before it was set running. The hunt began very early in the day, at daybreak or even before. There would be a gathering at the edge of the forest where the nobleman would receive the huntsman's reports and evidence on the animal or animals that he had harboured. At this point, members of the hunt would gather around the lord of the hunt for instructions and detailed plans would be laid for the ensuing chase.²³ After the huntsman, or huntsmen, had reported on the quality of game in the vicinity, a particular animal was chosen as the object of the hunt. The next step was the placing of relays, leashes of two or three hounds, along the animal's anticipated route. In order to place these relays most effectively, a detailed knowledge

of the countryside was necessary. The Master of Game advises that the relays be set by "them that know the country and the flight of the deer. And there where most danger is, there set the readiest hunters and the best footers with the boldest hounds with them." (p. 166). In England the careful setting of the relays included the placing of a lymer towards the end of the relays as a precaution in case the deer made a ruse and had to be found again by its scent.²⁴ Once the relays of hounds had been set in the place, the main body of the hunt would proceed to the chosen animal's lair where the actual chase would begin.

There was always a danger that the chase would end in failure. The hounds could easily lose track of their prey because of their own error, the weather, the lay of the land, or some ruse executed by the desperate animal. Medieval huntsmen knew too well that cunning was not the exclusive preserve of the fox. A ruse often used by deer was to retrace their tracks for some way towards the hunters and then to jump clear of the trail and start off in a new direction. The oncoming hounds would follow the trail past the point where the deer had jumped clear and come to a dead-end where the scent ran out. When this happened, it was said that the hounds had overshot the scent; the hunters would blow the "recheat," a signal that the hounds should backtrack in order to find the fresh trail. Sometimes the ruse was so successful that the deer was far away before the new trail was discovered. If contact with the animal had been lost, another signal, called the "forloyn," would be blown. Another ruse used by the deer was to go to water. The animal would plunge into

the stream or river and walk or swim for some way in an effort to lose its scent. Often, however, all the animal's ruses would be to no avail, and as the animal's strength diminished, the final stages of the hunt would be enacted. There were definite signs that the animal was weakening. The French hunting manual Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio discusses signs of exhaustion:

Il y a trois signes a quoi tu pourras apercevoir
se le cerf est desconfit. Le premier si est que un
cerf vaincu fuit volontiers aval le vent, affin que les
chiens n'aient le vent de lui, et si fait ses ruses courtes.
La seconde est quant il fuit reclos du pié et de la
gueule, c'est a dire que il fuioit devant la guelle
ouverte et il l'a close, et aussi, en fuiant, avoit les
pies ouvers et il sont reclos, c'est signe d'estre pres
de la fin. Le tiers est que, se tu le vois par aucune
voie et tu vois qu'il ait le poil hericie et droit sur
l'eschine et sur la crupe, c'est grant signe de mort, . . .²⁵

(There are three signs by which one can notice that the deer is discomfitted. The first is when it runs in the direction of the wind so that the dogs do not have its scent, and it does short runs or ruses. The second is when it runs with its mouth and toes closed, which formerly were open -- this is a sign that it is near its end. The third is if at any time you see bristling along its spine and rump, this is the chief sign of death, . . .)

The final sign of an exhausted animal was the appearance of bosses of foam around its mouth. At this stage the animal was said to be "embost," covered with flecks of foam resulting from hard running.²⁶

When all else had failed, the animal would turn at bay. This was a dangerous time, particularly if the game hunted was a boar. At this stage, boars were known to kill many men and decimate hounds of an entire hunt. Harts, too, were known to charge men on horseback and kill or maim hounds in their final desperate efforts

to escape.²⁷ Often the animal would stand at bay in a place that offered it some protection, usually under a tree or in a bush. The leading hunter, after waiting for the rest of the hunt to catch up, would dismount and approach the animal on foot. Sometimes stones would be thrown to make it move and give the hunter a better vantage point from where he could hamstring it. The next act entailed piercing the neck with a knife. Though the animal would already be more dead than alive, the final stroke with the knife was always performed to ensure the creature's death before the curée.

The curée, or quarry, if the slain animal were a deer was the grand finale of the hunt. It was a ritual that demanded great skill of the participants since rules for every knife stroke were laid down and proper performance was a sign of good breeding.²⁸ In "The Medieval Chase" Marcelle Thiébaux summarizes a typical curée. Drawing her account from the fourteenth century hunting manual Le Roy Modus,²⁹ Thiébaux shows the attention and care that the curée commanded.

According to the hunting manuals,

the stag was laid on its back, its feet in the air and its antlers bent groundward. First the testicles were removed and fastened to a forked stick . . . to which other morsels would be added and which would be borne home in the procession. The huntsmen then slit the animal from throat to tail, and made two other incisions across, one between the two forelegs and one between the two hindlegs. They next cut the hide around each of the four legs. The feet had to be removed in a certain order: right forefoot, left forefoot, right hindfoot, left hindfoot. Incisions were then made behind the ears, and the huntsmen could skin the animal, being sure to leave a thin layer of red flesh adhering to the hide.

Next they removed the shoulders, first the right and then the left. The removal of the entrails followed, the directions for which are extremely precise, [in the hunting manuals] indicating how they should be lifted out so that they came not separately but some of them clinging together. Tongue, trachea, esophagus, kidney, heart, lungs, intestines, and paunch were to be taken out; some of these pieces were added to the forked stick. The valets next cut the breast and broke the joints. They made incisions along the haunches, and the vertebrae, so that the sides could be pulled out and the carcass turned over and made to stand. At this point the haunches were tied together. The head and tail came off at the last. Throughout this procedure, all were made to exercise care lest any of the blood fall on the ground; everything must be caught on the hide.³⁰

It is made clear in The Master of Game that the intricacies of the curée tested one's skill in "woodsmancraft" rather than hunting. Edward writes:

Also if the Lord be there all things should be done of the bay and rewarding as before is said, and then he should charge whom he list to undo the deer, if the hounds shall not be enquyrid thereon, for if they should, there needeth no more but to caboche [cut off] his head. . . . But on the other hand if the lord will have the deer undone, he that he biddeth as before is said, should undo him most woodmanly, for it is a point that belongeth to woodsmancraft, though it be well suiting to a hunter to be able to do it. Nevertheless it belongeth more to woodsmancraft than to hunters, (p. 176)³¹

Twiti mentions the quarry merely in passing. In answering questions concerning the hunt, he states that he who plays the animal has the shoulder while the hounds are fed the neck, liver and entrails upon the hide of the animal. These few remarks are followed by the curt statement "That is called the quarry."³² However, in The Boke of St. Albans (1486), one finds a lengthy account of how a hunt is to be undone. The unknown author of the book gives detailed accounts that parallel to a large degree the

description in Le Roy Modus.³³ The relative silence of the Duke of York and William Twiti on the ceremony of the curée is interesting in view of the importance given it in continental manuals, Edward, Duke of York, declares

. . . as of the manner he [the hart] should be undone I pass over lightly, for there is no woodman nor good hunter in England that cannot do it well enough, and well better than I can tell them. (pp. 176-177)

Evidently the Duke of York and William Twiti wrote for those who were already acquainted with the hunt while The Boke of St. Albans addressed itself to beginners. Rachel Hands, in her edition of the work raises the question of whether it represents the methods used in England. It may be that the work, relying on French sources, failed to modify French practice to agree with the English customs.³⁴

Another deer hunt was one that involved hunting with bows and stables. It was a form of activity that was not so energetic as par force method. In this hunt beaters and hounds surrounded an area driving deer into a location where hunters stood under trees, either on platforms, the "stables" or on the ground. Such locations were known as "trystes," and as the frightened animals ran past the hunters stationed in them could shoot. Naturally, it was a type of hunting that afforded an opportunity to kill more animals, and it allowed members of the court who perhaps were not too cynegetically inclined to watch. Indeed, one gets the impression from The Master of Game that it was a form of hunting in which the women of the court participated. The manual mentions the creation of a special bower for the Queen:

. . . it is to be known that the attendants of his [the king's] chamber and of the queen's should be best placed, and two fewerers ought to make fair lodges of green boughs at the tryste to keep the King and Queen and ladies, and gentlewomen and also the greyhounds from the sun and bad weather. (p. 190)

Along with the detailed planning involved in par force hunting, and the intricacies of the curée, there was an exact terminology associated with the sport that also had to be mastered. For example, over two hundred different company names for animals were in use during the fifteenth century,³⁵ some of which, such as a pack of hounds, a herd of deer or a sounder of swine, are still common today. Every animal not only had a distinctive group name, but also an appellation depending on its age. Twiti calls a hart a calf, a brocket, a spayer, a stag, a great stag or a hart of the first head, depending on its age; different names are also given to other animals of the hunt according to age. The vocabulary of the sport dealt not only with the animals, but also with every conceivable action or state that might be encountered while pursuing the pastime. Consequently, as M.Y. Offord points out,³⁶ "there arose an endless array of appropriate verbs, nouns and adjectives the misapplication of any one of which stamped the offender as no gentleman." The hunter not only had to master a vast terminology but he also had to know which notes to blow on his horn and which ones to use to urge on the hounds. Once again, a great degree of exactness was required in both areas. The horn signals had to be clear and precise, as they imparted information to other hunters who were often outside calling distance; the

shouts to the hounds had to be exact since the kennelmen had trained the hounds to obey different shouts in particular ways.

The hunting parks in which the complex sport was followed were regarded as sanctuaries from the cares of everyday life. In Dialogus de Scaccario written in 1176, Richard Fitzneale, the retired Treasurer of England and Bishop of London, gives reasons for the existence of Forest Law, while explaining the workings to the exchequer.

. . . Sane forestarum ratio, pena quoque uel absolutio delinquentium in eas, siue pecuniaria fuerit siue corporalis, seorsum ab aliis regni indiciis secernitur et solius regis arbitrio uel cuiuslibet familiaris ad hoc specialiter deputati subicitur. Legibus quidem propriis subsistit quas non communi regni iure set uoluntaria principum institutione subnixas dicunt, adeo ut quod per legem eius factum fuerit non iustum absolute set iustum secundum legem foreste dicatur. In forestis etiam penetralia regum sunt et eorum maxime delicie. Ad has enim uenandi causa, curis quandoque depositis, accedunt ut modica quiete recreentur. Illic, seriis simul et innatis curie tumultibus omissis, in naturalis libertatis gratiam paulisper respirant, unde fit ut delinquentes in eam soli regie subiaceant animaduersioni.³⁷

The whole organization of the forests, the punishment, pecuniary or corporal, of forest offences, is outside the jurisdiction of the other courts, and solely dependent on the decision of the King, or of some officer specially appointed by him. The forest has its own laws, based it is said, not on the Common Law of the realm, but on the arbitrary legislation of the King; so that what is done in accordance with forest law is not called 'just' without qualification, but 'just according to forest law'. It is in the forests too that the 'King's chambers' are, and their chief delights. For they come there, laying aside their cares now and then, to hunt, as a rest and recreation. It is there that they can put from them the anxious turmoil native to a court, and take a little breath in the free air of nature. And that is why forest offenders are punished only at the King's pleasure.³⁸

Though Richard Fitzneale here deals with the King's solace and "chief delights," the hunting parks, in which Forest Law operated, provided places of relaxation and refuge for many medieval noblemen.

According to Genesis (2:26), man was to have "dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Such dominion was nowhere more apparent than in the parks where the Lord ruled by royal grant and Forest Law over everything; thus, hunting, with the laws and parks created for its use, was a manifestation of mastery. Sometimes an individual's mastery over an area of land was established through hunting rights, and it appears that these rights were challenged by others through the medium of the hunt.

F.J. Child, in discussing The Hunting of the Cheviot, suggests that the subject of the ballad -- hunting in a neighbour's park without permission -- though it lacks historical confirmation, did, indeed, have some foundation in fact. Child asserts that it was

. . . one of the laws of The Marches, frequently renewed between nations, that neither party should hunt in the other's borders, without leave from the proprietors or their deputies. There had long been a rivalry between the two martial families of Percy and Douglas, which heightened by the national quarrel, must have produced frequent challenges and struggles for superiority, petty invasions of their respective domains, . . . which would not always be recorded in history. Something of this kind, we may suppose gave rise to the ancient ballad of the Hunting of the Cheviot. Percy Earl of Northumberland had vowed to hunt for three days in the Scottish border, without condescending to ask leave from Earl Douglas,

who was either lord of the soil, or lord warden of the Marches. Douglas would not fail to resent the insult, and endeavour to repel the intruders by force: . . . something of which, it is probable, did really happen, . . .³⁹

Writing in the sixteenth century, Machiavelli gives other reasons for the importance of the privacy of the hunting parks, reasons which would have applied to the previous centuries. Regarding the prince's responsibility to keep continually in practise for the contingencies of war, Machiavelli writes:

Debbe per tanto mai levare el pensiero da questo esercizio della guerra, a nella pace vi si debbe più esercitare che nella guerra; il che può fare in dua modi: l'uno con le opere, l'altro con la mente. E, quanto alle opere, oltre al tenere bene ordinati et esercitati li sua, debbe stare sempre in sulle caccie, e mediante quelle assuefare el corpo a' disagi; e parte imparare la natura de' siti, e conoscere come surgono e' monti, come imboccano le valle, come iacciono e' piani, et intendere la natura de' fiumi e de' paduli, et in questo porre grandissima cura. La quale cognizione è utile in dua modi. Prima, s'impara a conoscere el suo paese, e può meglio intendere le difese di esso; di poi, mediante la cognizione e practica di quelli siti, con facilità comprendere ogni altro sito che di nuovo li sia necessario speculare: . . .⁴⁰

(He ought, therefore, never to let his thoughts stray from the exercise of war; and in peace he ought to practise it more than in war, which he can do in two ways; by action and by study. As to action, he must, besides keeping his men well disciplined and exercised, engage continually in hunting, and thus accustom his body to hardships; and meanwhile learn the nature of the land, how steep the mountains are, how the valleys debouch, where the plains lie, and understand the nature of rivers and swamps. To all this he should devote great attention. This knowledge is useful in two ways. In the first place, one learns to know one's country, and can see better how to defend it. Then by means of knowledge and

experience gained in one locality, one can easily understand any other that it may be necessary to observe;⁴¹

Hunting par force, with its setting of relays along projected routes, demanded an expert knowledge of the countryside, while the arduous nature of the chase itself ensured that its devotees stayed in good physical condition.

The hunting lord with his retinue of hard riding nobles, huntsmen, lymerers, and other followers of the chase contributed to the conception of the world as a merry place. Alongside the more sober idea of man's life as a journey or pilgrimage there was a notion

. . . of man as not altogether forlorn in this earth and as having a place in the scheme of the universe. At least, it is alternately a sad and a merry thing that man's earthly life forms part of the natural pattern or rhythm, shares in the alternation of day and night, in the revolution of the year, winter and spring, sowing-time and harvest, in the cycle of youth and age, death and birth, destruction and renewal. . . . there is a sense of the unity, the indivisibility of the whole diversity of things and creatures, and of an intimate connexion between them and man.⁴²

The revolution of the year and the pattern or rhythms of nature governed the medieval hunt to a great degree. Every facet of the sport was dependent on the rhythms of forest life; hunters, in order to enjoy success, had to know intimately how the seasons affected the various animals. According to the hunting manuals, certain animals could be hunted only at certain times. Exact dates for the hunting of certain animals are given which show a knowledge of how forest life was affected by the seasons. For

example, we are told in The Master of Game that the wild boar season

. . . begins from the Holy Cross day in September to the feast of St. Andrew for then they go to the brimming of the sows. For they are in grease when they be withdrawn from the sows. The sows are in season from the brimming time which is to say the twelfth day after Christmas till the time when they have farrowed. (p. 49)

The phrase "in grease" refers to a fattened animal. Since considerations of the larder were an important factor in the hunt, it was important to kill the game when it was in prime condition. To be able to recognise the various signs of a prime animal was part also of a huntsman's "woodsmancraft." One of the most informative signs an animal left was its droppings, the nature of which depended on the seasons and the food that they provided. The Master of Game declares of the hart:

When they crotey their fumes flat and not thick, it is in April or in May, into the middle of June, when they have fed on tender corn, for yet their fumes be not formed, and also they have not recovered their grease. But yet have men seen sometimes a great deer and an old and high in grease, which is about mid-season crotey fumes black and dry. And therefore by this and many other things many men may be beguiled by deer, for some goeth better and are better running and fly better than some, as other beasts do, and some be more cunning and more wily than others, as it is with men, for some be wiser than others. And it cometh to them of the good kind of their father and mother, and of good getting (breeding) and of good nuture and from being born in good constellations, and in good signs of heaven, and that (is the case) with men and all other beasts. (p. 30)

One sees that the skill of "woodsmancraft" to the medieval hunter entailed not only mastering the lore of the forest but also pitting his wits against animals that exhibited different levels of cunning. As part of creation, dependent on the seasonal rhythms of forest life, the animals, like man, were also seen as under the influence of the constellations and heavenly order.

The pastime was not universally praised. Hunting was seen by some ecclesiastics, notably St. Bernard, as an activity in which one took much pleasure from the things of this world.⁴³ The thirteenth century lyric "Vbi sount qui ante nos fueront" begins with the question "Uere be pey biforen vs weren,/Houndes ladden and hauckes beren/And hadden feld and wode?" (ll. 1-3)⁴⁴ The lyric catalogues the pleasures that some people enjoy so extensively in this world that they are in danger of losing their souls. The third stanza refers specifically to the joys of hunting and hawking:

Were is pat lawing and pat song,
Pat trayling and pat proude 3ong,
Po hauekes and po houndes?
Al pat ioye is went away,
Pat wele is comen te weylaway,
To manie harde stoundes. (ll. 13-18)

Besides the argument that hunting was part of a way of life that was too "merry" for the good of one's soul, there were other more esoteric arguments based on the writings of learned men. One of these arguments involved the use of the word venator which could be read as either gladiator, a fighter of beasts, or hunter. Marcelle Thiébaux states that because of the confusion surrounding this word, Canon VIII of Gratian's Decretum "deplores the giving of goods to actors, harlots, and hunters." Thiébaux also discusses an

exegetical reading of Psalm 91: "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snares of the fowler," in which both Nimrod and Esau are called wicked hunters. The reading, Thiébaux says

. . . appeared in the Brevarium in Psalmos; because this work was wrongly attributed to Saint Jerome, a portion of its gloss was destined to be repeated continually in the form of a sententia emanating from that authority. The wording of the sententia varied, but it ran to the effect that the writer had never found in scripture any good thing said of (or holy men among) hunters; among fishermen, however (fishing being a more peaceful and virtuous distraction especially if regarded symbolically, as with St. Peter and St. Andrew) holy men have been found. By the twelfth century, the Decretum of Gratian restated the sententia in Canon IX along with the observation that "Esau was a hunter because he was a sinner."⁴⁵

In 1373, the Bishop of Winchester held a visitation at the priory of Selbourne where he found many abuses and irregularities, some of which were caused by hunting monks. In his list of complaints, he mentions that the pursuit of the chase causes dissipation, danger to the soul and body and frequent expense. In conclusion, he counsels the canons never to be present at noisy hunts nor keep any hounds within or without the convent.⁴⁶

The expense involved in the sport was certainly one of the main objections to clergy hunting. John Wycliff who, in writing about curates, says ". . . hou euyl it is to suffre pore men perische for hungire and thriste and cold, and here curatis han fatte hors with gaye sadlis and bridelis."⁴⁷

Such criticism, of course, was not allowed to go unanswered by the enthusiasts of the sport. King Modus, the allegorical personage of the hunting manual the Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, makes the claim that the hunter escapes the sin of sloth which is the

source of all other evils. This claim that originated in Ovid's Remedia Amoris⁴⁸ was restated by Gaston Phoebus and then translated by Edward, Second Duke of York in The Master of Game:

Furthermore I will prove by sundry reasons in this little prologue, that the life of no man that useth gentle game and disport be less displeasable unto God than the life of a perfect and skillful hunter, or from which more good cometh. The first reason is that hunting causeth a man to eschew the seven deadly sins. Secondly men are better when riding, more just and more understanding, and more alert and more at ease and more undertaking, and better knowing of all countries and all passages; in short and long all good customs and manners cometh thereof, and the health of man and of his soul. . . . Now shall I prove how a hunter may not fall into any of the seven deadly sins. When a man is idle and reckless without work, and be not occupied in doing something, he abides in his bed or in his chamber, a thing which draweth men to imaginations of fleshly lust and pleasure. For such men have no wish but to abide in one place, and think in pride, or in avarice, or in wrath, or in sloth, or in gluttony, or in lechery, or in envy. For the imagination of men rather turns to evil than to good (pp. 4-5)

Edward goes on to prove how a hunter escapes the Seven Deadly Sins. He gets up early, usually just before daybreak, he says mass, and he has to think rightaway about the hunt; therefore, he has no time for idleness. The intricacies of the sport force him to be alert at all times so that his mind cannot wander into the realms of "evil imagination." Even after the animal is dead, the huntsman is "less idle, for he hath enough to do to think how to undo the hart in his manner and to raise that which appertaineth to him, and well to do his curee." (p. 7) After the curée, the huntsman must search for missing hounds; thus, when he comes home after a day's hunt he is too tired to sin. In fact, all he can think about at that stage of the day is to have his supper and go to bed. At the end of this

long argument which takes up a large section of the prologue to The Master of Game, Edward asserts triumphantly:

Wherefore I say that such an hunter is not idle,
he can have no evil thoughts nor can he do not evil
works, wherefore' he must go into paradise. For by
many other reasons which are too long to write can I
prove these things, but it sufficeth that every man
that hath good sense knoweth well that I speak the
real truth. (p. 8)

The argument about whether the clergy should hunt was one that the church was destined to lose. Marcelle Thiébaux points out that the structure of medieval society was such that many of the clergy were drawn from the ranks of noble families; therefore, many clerics were well versed in the arts of hunting and hawking before taking their vows. Thiébaux remarks that from the sixth century when the first disapproval of the sport was stated until the Council of Montpellier in 1215, which prohibited bishops from keeping or carrying hawks, there grew a tacit recognition of the attraction that the sport held for some. Though ecclesiastical laws were continually renewed, their severity eventually lapsed till in 1215 the royal Forest Charter granted permission to archbishops and bishops to hunt certain animals as they journeyed through the forests. The charter merely initiated a larger leniency of forest law that recognised the fact that many of the upper clergy were devotees of the hunt.⁴⁹

The hunting manuals not only defend the sport against ecclesiastical criticism by showing that a hunter might escape the perils of the Seven Deadly Sins in following the sport, but they also provide explicit allegorical associations of the animals hunted.

In Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, the ultimate source for much of Edward, Duke of York's, The Master of Game, Queen Ratio explicates the allegorical meaning of the factual material presented by King Modus. The deer is said to represent human nature made timid since the Fall and the ten branches of its antlers are equated to the ten commandments; as the antlers protect the animal, so the ten commandments protect man. The hunt itself is used as an allegory of the Christian life.

A demoustrer comment l'en doit fuir a ses
aversaires; j'ai ailleurs fait desclaracion en cest
livre comme cerf fuist quant il est chassie; il fuit
les voiez dures et seches, affin que les chiens
qui le(s) chassent ne puissent assentir, et puis va a
l'ae pour soi baigner, affin que il perdent l'asenter
de lui. Ainsi doit fuir homme quant le deable le
chasse, c'est quant il le tante; il doit aler les
dures voies, il doit faire penitance et courre a l'iaue,
c'est l'iaue benoite, affin que le diable ne sante et
conniose sa trache.⁵⁰

(To show how one must flee one's enemies: I declare further in this book how the deer flees when he is chased; he flees from the hard and dry ways, so that the dogs which are chasing him cannot get his scent, and then he goes to water, to immerse himself so that they lose his scent. So man must do when the devil chases him, that is when he tempts him, he has to go along the hard roads, he has to do penance and run to water, so that the devil cannot scent him or find his tracks.)

The allegorical connection between the deer hunt and Christianity is further strengthened when Queen Ratio, referring to the legend of Saint Eustace, says that the death of Our Lord is shown by the deer because Saint Eustace saw the crucified Christ in its horns.⁵¹

Queen Ratio also explains the significance of the boar. In a lengthy section of Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio the animal undergoes damning allegorization and is clearly labelled as a

creature of the Anti-Christ:

La premier propriété qui est u sainglier est que il est noir et herichié. Aussi puis je dire que gens qui par leurs pechiés perdent la lumiere esperituel et ont fichiés leur ceurs es choses terraines sont noirs, herichiés et tenebrés, et de ceste condicion sont moult de gens qui regnent au temps present, car leur pensees tesretres oupent les lumieres espreitueles, pour quoi je puis dire que tieus gens qui sont noirs et herichiés et orribles comme le sainglier.⁵²

(The first property of the boar is that it is black and bristly. So I can say that people who through their sins lose the spiritual light and have set their hearts on earthly things are black, bristly and shadowy. At the present time there are many who rule that are in this condition because their earthly thoughts usurp spiritual ones, thus I can say they are black, bristly and horrible like the boar.)

In discussing what are seen to be other properties of the animal, Queen Ratio paints an unremittingly dark picture of the boar in which it is seen as the servant of the Anti-Christ.

The exactingly planned and ordered chase described by King Modus and the allegorizations of Queen Ratio reflect two important areas of medieval cosmology: those of order and of correspondences between the different levels of the cosmic hierarchy. The universe was seen as a vast ladder of creation in which ascending entities had their ordered places in an unbroken line from the abyss of hell to the infinite, ultimate unity of God. In such a divinely created order every object or concept was, at the same time, a part of some greater whole and also a microcosm of inferior creation; thus, every creature was involved in the "Great Chain of Being." Man held a central critical place in this chain: his soul linked him with the heavenly orders that led to God, while his body gave him dominion over the creatures of the earth. In The Medieval Centuries

Denys Hay explains:

From such an organization of the whole of experience derived the acceptance of what seem to us somewhat strange analogies. It was possible to argue from one part of the cosmic hierarchy to another; to define the relations of father to family or of pope to emperor, from the superiority of the heart to the limbs or the sun to the moon. And once such a correspondence had been established it had all the compulsion of eternal and inescapable truth.⁵³

Thus, the deer hunt could be seen to represent the Christian life, and the properties of the boar to correspond to those of sinful people. Though the middle English romances are not explicitly allegories, they shared the same audiences with the hunting manuals of the time which, like Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, contained a certain amount of allegory. Therefore, any investigation of the hunting scenes in middle English romance must take into account the metaphysical associations of the animals hunted, because often these literary hunts contained for their audiences microcosmic reflections of the struggles between life and death, and between order and disorder.

CHAPTER TWO
THE DEER AND
THE DEER HUNT

The meritorious allegorization of the deer hunt given by Queen Ratio in Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio was in harmony with the generally beneficent view of the animal in medieval Europe. Such an attitude was nowhere more prevalent than in the bestiaries, one of the most popular genres of the Middle Ages which had sources that went back, ultimately, through the Fathers of the Church, Rome, Greece, and Egypt to an oral tradition which probably was "contemporary with the caves of Cromagnon."¹

The Bestiaries clearly exemplify the medieval concept of the world as a book that had many levels of meaning to which the Bible provided the key. In their pages pagan folklore and Christian interpretation are inextricably interwoven; fabulous tales of animals, written before the dawn of Christianity, are given mystical commentary by medieval ecclesiastics. In The Gothic Image, Emile Mâle gives a succinct account of the influence that the bestiaries had in medieval Europe:

. . . The celebrated Physiologus, a symbolic Bestiary of which the original text is lost, goes back to primitive Christian days, probably to the second century. Ancient Greek, Latin and Armenian texts show that the Physiologus was known through the entire Christian world. Western people soon translated it into their own tongues. . . . The condemnation pronounced on the Bestiary by Pope Gelasius deterred no one from reading and quoting the Physiologus. It carried, moreover, the authority of the Fathers of the Church, for Augustine, Ambrose and Gregory the Great frequently borrowed from it. Preachers like Honorius of Autun, therefore, felt no scruple in drawing symbolic or edifying interpretations from it, while the learned Vincent of Beauvais, Bartolomaeus de Glanvilla and Thomas Cantimpratanus far from scorning the fables gave them the rank of scientific facts.²

The sole surviving Middle English Bestiary, written in the first half of the thirteenth century, is a close translation of the Latin Physiologus of Theobaldus. In it one finds allegorizations of thirteen creatures, one of which is the hart. The animal is said to display two qualities, each of which merits explication. The first deals with the legend that stags were supposed to sniff up adders from under rocks and then run to water to quench a thirst that was burning inside them and also to render the adder's venom harmless. In the process of doing so the stag was also said to cast off his horns and so renew his youth. The Christian explanation reasons thus:

Alle we atter dragen off ure eldere,
 ðe broken drigtinnes word ðurg ðe neddre;
 ðer ðurg haveð mankin
 boðen nið and win,
 kolsipe and gisting,
 givernesse and wissing,
 pride and over-wene;
 swilc atter i-mene.
 Ofte we brennen in mod,
 and wurðen so we weren wod;
 ðanne we ðris brennen;
 bihoveð us to rennen
 to Cristes quike welle,
 ðat we ne gon to helle;
 drinken his wissing,
 it quenchet ilc siniging;
 for-werpen pride everil del,
 so hert doð hise hornes;
 gingen us tris to gode--ward,³
 and gemen us siðen forð-ward.

(Just so, from our forefathers, all
 Inherit adders from the Fall
 Each time we go against God's word,
 By the snake to evil stirred.
 Hence man has a life
 Of turmoil and strife,
 Lechery and covetousness,
 Wishing harm and greediness,
 Pride and overweening:

Such adders are my meaning.
 We often burn with passions bad,
 And so become just like the mad.
 When thus with rage on fire,
 We must with keen desire
 Run to the living well
 Of Christ and so shun hell.
 There we must drink God's word
 Till all our sins are cured.
 There we shall cast aside,
 As stag his horns, our pride
 In sight of God our youth restore,
 And guard our virtue evermore.)⁴

The second quality of the hart described in bestiary material concerns the legend about the animals crossing a river. The account states that harts cross in single file with the second hart resting its head on the leader's rump, in turn the third animal places its head on the rump of the second and so on. Medieval ecclesiastics had little trouble finding Christian significance in this attribute.

ðe hertes costes we ogen to munen,
 ne og ur non oðer to sunen,
 oc evrilc luven oðer,
 also he were his broder,
 wurden stedefast his wine,
 ligten him of his birdene,
 helpen him at his nede;
 God give² ðer-fore mede:
 we sulen haven hevenriche,
 gef we ben twixen us ben briche:
 ðus is ure loverdes lage,
 luvelike to fillen,
 herof have we mikel ned,
 ðat we ðar wið ne dillen.⁵

(This custom we should bear in mind,
 And we should leave all sin behind,
 And all of us love one another,
 And treat each man like our brother,
 And loyally assist each friend
 To bear the load which makes him bend;
 God shall reward us then
 For helping needy men.)⁶

The legend of Saint Eustace referred to by Queen Ratio was also known in medieval England. According to the middle English version of the story:

Of honting he coupe. I.-nou,
In heye wode and vnder bou
And in wilde felde.
He rod on hunting on a day:
On hert he founde, per he lay
Wel faire ounder on helde.

Pe hert wes muchel, of heie cinde,
Per he wes ounder wode linde,
Mest he wes of alle;
O ere hertes and hindes mo,
More and lasse, per weren also,
He stod stiuest of alle.

Pe muchele hert atorn away,
Pe kni3t rod after ni3t and day
Bi him-self al-one,
Oout in an oper kinges londe:
Per him gan pe hert astonde
Ovpon a roche of stone.

Pe hert bitur(n)de is hornes heye,
Pere he wes ounder wode leye,
And seyde: "Placidus,
Pou art a kni3t of hounting fre -
Pou me driuest and I. Pe fle-
Rid nou pi softe pas!

Bituene min hornes pou mi3t loke,
Pe feirest ping pat stont in boke
Wel sone pou salt ise:
Jhesu Cristes creis .I. - wis,
Pat sal pe bringen alle blis
And hountep after pe".

Pe li3t of heuene and pe glem,
Bri3ttore pen pe sunne bem,
Ovpon pat hert ali3tte.
Pe hert spak, alse a mon hit were,
Wip pat feire kni3te pere - 7
Ich wot, hit wes oure dri3te.

(11. 13-48)

The role of the hart in the legend of Placidus - St. Eustace is similar to the role played by numerous harts and hinds in the pages of romance. The hart hunt serves to isolate Placidus from his companions; such isolation emphasizes the honour conferred on Placidus as he among many is chosen to receive the vision. He is not merely one of many hunters, but one particular hunter who in turn has been chosen to be hunted for particularly Christian purposes. The vision of Christ between the hart's horns in the Placidus - St. Eustace legend and the definite Christian moralization attached to the deer hunt by Queen Ratio connect the deer very strongly with the Christian good. Such a connection, I maintain, also influences the general purposes for which deer hunts are used in Middle English romance.

Hunts after various types of deer abound in Middle English poetry. First of all, there are numerous passing references which generally occur at the beginning of a romance. The main purpose of the hunt in these instances is to establish a setting of peace and harmony, an orderly world which man controls. Naturally, for the purposes of literature, this tranquility surrounding the protagonist is broken as tensions that are central to the work come to the surface. In some romances, reference to the pastime is more than casual as the description of the hunt's beginning is used as a catalyst and a form of prefiguration of subsequent events. In other romances it is the final stage of a deer hunt, the curée, that is the focus of authorial attention, since that part of the sport may be used to reveal the noble upbringing of a hero. Finally, the corpus

of extant Middle English literature includes a few works in which more than a casual reference or partial description of the pastime is given. In these works, deer hunts occupy such a central place that an understanding of the sport and the associations that the deer held in medieval cosmology allows one a better knowledge of the literary concerns.

Many romances open with a vignette depicting a world at peace. Often in these short descriptions hunting imagery has a central place in establishing an initial orderly setting. In Kyng Alisaunder, for example, the astrologer Neptanabus, in disguise as the god Amon, has his will with Olympias, Philip of Macedon's wife, while Philip is away at war. Seeing that Olympias is pregnant, some courtiers send him a warning that speeds his return. Deer hunting imagery is used to good effect in describing the anxious period of waiting that Olympias undergoes:

Herip now how sunful lyf
 Comup to sorwe wo and stryf
 Whan corn ripep in euery steode
 Mury hit is in feld and hyde
 Synne hit is and schame to chide
 Kny3tis wollip on huntynge ride
 Pe deor galopip by wodis side
 He pat can his time abyde
 Al his wille his schal by tyde
 Pe quene grete~~r~~ wi~~p~~ quyk bon
 By ~~pe~~ false god Amon
 To Neptanabus heo made hir mon
 And asked what hire was to don
 Heo dradde hire lord Philipoun.⁸
 (ll. 453-466)

Between the narrator's warning of the consequences of a sinful life and the description of Olympias' dread at the idea of Philip's return there is a vignette of a happy land in which all is harmony

and order. This vignette of peace and tranquility is constructed by using two image patterns familiar to the medieval audience. Both patterns of hunting and agricultural plenty carry with them connotations of order. The ripening corn recalls the ordered progression of the seasons, and the knights hunting the deer by the side of the woods represent the complex and highly structured world of the medieval hunt. The juxtaposition of this scene with the following lines that describe Olympias' state of anxiety seems to be deliberate. The calm and harmony of the world, accentuated by the references to the ripening corn and the knights galloping gladly through the woods, contrast with the misery of Olympias. The ordered harmony of the outer world serves to isolate and heighten the state of disorder and fear in which Olympias finds herself. The deer hunting imagery is used here to aid the author in eliciting sympathy for Olympias by contrasting the happiness of the world that surrounds her with her own private unhappiness.

In Guy of Warwick, the hero marries Felice, the daughter of Earl Rohaut. The wedding feast lasts a fortnight and the couple experience extreme happiness as they beget a child on the first night of their marriage. On the fifteenth day the guests depart and shortly thereafter Guy has a change of heart that alters Felice's joy to sorrow.

It was in May in somers tyde:
 Guy was at Warrewik in moche pride.
 From huntyng on a daye he is come,
 Grete plente of venyson he hath nome.
 Moche ioye he made and solas,
 So that in the evenyng so mery he was.

The contree he behelde aboute farre,
 And the skye thikke with sterre,
 And the weder that was mery and bright.
 Guy bethoughte him anone right
 That God him had so moche honour doo
 In all landes that he come to,
 That he come neuere in noo fighte
 Bot he was holde the best knyghte,
 And ne er for his creatour,
 That had doon him so grete honour.

And in his mynde bethoughte him anone
 That all his lif he wolde chaunge tho,
 And in goddis seruyse he wolde him do.⁹
 (ll. 7390-7408)

Guy's reaction to his good fortune recalls the argument presented in the thirteenth century lyric "Vbi sount qui anti nos fueront." In his state of bliss Guy could well have become one of those who "Houndes ladden and hauekes beren/ And hadden feld and wode?"¹⁰ However, he escapes the folly of relying too much on the pleasures of this world; his success at hunting, along with the rest of his good fortune, causes him to think about the state of his soul. Realizing that his excess of good fortune may lull him into a life of ease and cause him to forget God, he remedies the situation by going on a pilgrimage. The 'solas' that Guy enjoys while hunting contributes to the paradisiacal setting at Warwick that eventually causes Guy to reflect on his life.

The connection between earthly good fortune and hunting is stated even more explicitly in Sir Isumbras. In this romance, the aristocratic hero is blessed with good fortune from birth. Endowed with physical strength and beauty, he also possesses courtesy, prowess, worship and the company of a lovely wife and three beautiful children. In the midst of all these blessings he

he appears to be in full control of all that surrounds him. As his hawks and hounds wander away and his horse falls dead beneath him, we are presented with startling evidence of his downfall (literally as well as figuratively!). Sir Isumbras' lowly state is underscored by the line "One fote now moste hym nedis goo," (1. 72).

In Sir Degrevant, hunting is used at first to establish both Degrevant's good fortune and good character. Of his good fortune, we read:

Pare was sessid in his hande
 A hundrethe pondis worthe of londe
 Of rent wele sittande,
 And somm-dele more;
 Many ploughes in pe maynes,
 Grete hertes in pe haynes
 Faire bares in pe playnes
 And mekill tame store;

 (11. 65-72)¹³

Here, as in Kyng Alisaunder, hunting imagery combines with that of agricultural wealth to depict a bountiful and peaceful world. That he is a good man who is fortunate enough to live in such a world is attested to by a description of Sir Degrevant at the hunt.

He walde be vp or daye
 To hunt and to ryvaye;
 Gretly gafe him to playe
 Ilke a day newe;
 To here messe or he went
 Trewly in gud entent,
 And sythyn buskede to pe bent
 Whare gamnes in grewe.
 To his foreste to founde
 Both with horne and with hunde;
 To brynge pe dere to pe grounde
 Was his master glewe.
 Certis, wyfe wolde he nane,
 Wench ne no lemman,
 Bots als an ankyre in a stane
 He lyved here trewe.
 (11. 49-64)

That Sir Degrevant's "master glewe" or chief pleasure is to hunt deer is given as an indication of his good character. The fact that he goes to mass before he sets out for the hunt reinforces his good standing and frees him from the condemnation suffered by those who loved the sport so much that, like Sir Isumbras, they forgot their duty to the church. Though his passion for hunting does not separate him from his devotions, it does, at this point in the story, cause him to neglect women. However, since his neglect is seen as a sign of chastity, it carries with it no condemnation. He is "als ankyre in a stane" who lives a true life according to mother church. At this point Sir Degrevant exemplifies the argument of Gaston Phoebus and Edward, Second Duke of York, that hunters escape the Seven Deadly Sins, particularly those of lust and sloth, because the hunt keeps them so active during the day that all they want to do at night is to have a good sleep. In this fitt, Sir Degrevant's fondness for the sport of hunting not only helps to portray him as a nobleman, but in association with his devotion to the church this predilection for deer hunting contributes to a portrayal of a noble soul. Though there is no description of a curée or any detailed close-up view of a deer hunt in Sir Degrevant, the sport initiates the first stages of the romance and is central to the progress of the plot. Beside Sir Degrevant, lives his neighbour Earl Rohaut:

Ther womnede an Eorl him by-syd,
 Pe, a lord off mechell pryd,
 That hadd viij forestes ful wyd,
 And bowres full brode;
 He hade a grete spyt of pe knyght

That was so hardy and wyght,
 And thought howe he best myght
 That dowghty to gr(a)de.
 He was sterne and stoute,
 And rode in a gay route,
 And brak hys parkes about,
 The best that he hade;
 Ther-inne he made a sory pley,
 The fattest he feld in fey,
 By sixty on a day,
 Suche maystries he made.
 (11. 97-112)

The key to what is described in this fitt is the last line,
 "Suche maystries he made". The hunt here is used as a vehicle to
 obtain mastery, and seems to reflect, as we have seen in Chapter
 One, real-life situations. In Sir Degrevant, the author uses this
 struggle for mastery to engineer a confrontation that both reveals
 a little of Sir Degrevant's otherwise completely flat character and
 allows a meeting between the hero and Meliador, the earl's daughter
 -- an event that leads to reconciliation and marriage. In this
 struggle for mastery, the earl who is the initial aggressor becomes
 a hunted person as he is pursued by Sir Degrevant back to his own
 castle. Sir Degrevant is not content with having beaten the earl
 in battle but asserts his dominion by laying waste the earl's
 hunting preserves. At this point in the romance, Sir Degrevant
 and Meliador have seen and fallen in love with each other. Though
 Sir Degrevant could enter the earl's castle, he does not. He
 comments:

'Y lette for my gentriese
 To do swych robberyse,
 For seche fayr laydes
 Ther Casteles to fray;
 Sen Y mey do no mare,

Tyll his freth wyl Y fare,
 Y woll no wyld best spare,
 For soth all this day.
 (ll. 497-504)

For what follows is a description of the utter ravaging of the earl's hunting parks. With horn and hound Sir Degrevant and his hunters exact retribution. In turn sixty deer are slain, thus answering the "sexty on a daye" (l. 111.) that the earl had slain earlier. Though the depiction of Sir Degrevant as a deer hunter at the beginning of the poem helps to portray a world of order, the two following deer hunts of the earl and then of Sir Degrevant, are instruments of disorder, showing the darker, savage side of the pastime that was so often cloaked by procedure and ceremony.

The mention of the hounds and the horns in the initial description of Sir Degrevant as a hunter suggests the par force method of the sport in which order and strict observance of hunting lore were followed. However, Earl Rohaut when ravaging the hero's parks appears to be hunting with bows and stables; it was this method of hunting rather than the par force method that allowed the slaughter of a large number of animals. The widespread destruction of Sir Degrevant's parks, the wholesale butchery of his deer, and the vengeance that he in turn exacts in the Earl's parks accentuate the savagery to which uncontrolled deer hunting could descend.

King Alisaunder, Guy of Warwick, Sir Isumbras and Sir Degrevant all include references to deer hunting which have some connection with the concept of order. In King Alisaunder, the tranquil ordered world that surrounds Olympias is depicted partially through

hunting imagery. In Guy of Warwick, the hunt is used both as an integral part of a world at peace, and as an activity that causes the hero to reflect on his extreme fortune in living in such peaceful beneficence. In Sir Isumbras, the figure of the hunter, Sir Isumbras, depicts a man apparently in control of a well ordered world of which he is the master; he is then, necessarily, reminded of the greater order of heaven as the ordered world, represented by instruments of the hunt, dissolves before him and he is left alone. In Sir Degrevant, the sport is used initially to enhance the hero's character and then to reflect human savagery and the resultant disorder that uncontrolled uncivilized behaviour can create.

Some Middle English romances do more than refer to the pastime in general terms. In these works a part of a specific hunt is shown. Sometimes it is the initial stages of the chase that attracts authorial attention, while at other times it is the final stage of the sport, the curée, that comes under scrutiny. The romance of The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell opens with a scene in which King Arthur is hunting in Inglewood Forest

Withe alle hys bold knyghtes good,
 . . .
 The Kyng was sett att hys trestylle-tree,
 Withe his bowe to sle the wylde venere,
 And his lordes were sett hym besyde;
 As the kyng stode, then he was ware,
 Where a greatt hartt was and a fayre,
 And forthe fast dyd he glyde.
 The hartt was in a braken ferne.
 And hard the g[r]ounds, and stode fulle derne,
 Alle sawe the kyng.
 "Hold you styлле euery man,
 And wolle goo my-self, yf I can
 With crafte of stalking."

The kyng in hys hand toke a bowe
 And wodmanly he stowpyd lowe,
 To stalk vnto that dere;
 When that he cam the dere fulle nere
 The dere lept forthe into a brere,
 And e ere the kyng went nere and nere
 So kyng Arthure went a whyle,
 After the dere, I trowe, half a myle
 And no man withe hym went;
 And att the last to the dere he lett flye
 And smote him sore and sewerly.
 (11. 17-40)¹⁴

Arthur, having isolated himself from the rest of the hunt, is some distance from his companions before he manages to kill the deer. Just as he does so he is accosted by "a quaynt grome . . . A knyghte fulle strong and of great myghte," (11. 50-52) whose name is Gromer Somer Joure. He has a grievance because Arthur has given his lands to Sir Gawain. He challenges Arthur to a fight, but the king, being in hunting dress and so relatively unarmed, asks to be excused. The knight lets Arthur go on the condition that he return to the same place in a year's time with the correct answer to the question, "What is it that women love the most?" The rest of the poem deals with the quest for the correct answer.

Though the hunt here is not of the usual par force kind, it nevertheless serves the purpose of isolating the king and initiating adventure. Since Arthur cannot become separated from his companions by outriding them, isolation is achieved by his command "Hold you styлле every man,/ And wolle goo my-self, yf I can/ With craft of stalking." (11.28 -30) A deliberate command is necessary because the type of hunt in progress appears to be one in which stables and bows are used and the hunted animal or animals are driven towards waiting hunters. However, at the appearance of

the hart, Arthur elects to stalk the creature alone. This deliberate choice removes the element of accident from his eventual isolation. His persistence in stalking the beast through half a mile of brush aids in characterizing him as an individual who will persevere to the end. Such perseverance prepares the reader for the peregrination that ensues as an answer is sought to Gromer Somer Joure's question.

The type of hunt most often referred to both in Middle English romance and the hunting manuals of Medieval England is the par force method. Such a hunt is described in the romance of Generydes.

Vppon a day the kyng for his disporte
 An huntyng went onto a fayre forest,
 Whanne he was sadde to putte hym in coumfort
 he lefte his men at home bothe most and lesse.
 Save iiij or v suche as hym semyd best
 And forth he gothe ther as the hartys hye,
 his houndys were oncopelyd by and by.

An hert was fownde among the holtys hye,
 And vppe vppon his fete he was a non;
 The houndys went after with a mery crye
 The kyng rode after all hym self alone,
 Tyll he hadde lost his knyghtes euerychone
 The houndes and the hert that was be fore,
 Withynne a while they harde them nomore.

(ll. 36-49)¹⁵

The ostensible reason for this hunt is that the king wishes to comfort himself by getting away for a while from an unfaithful wife. Thus, once again, Fitzneale's argument that the pastime was valued for its curative or recuperative purposes appears to be upheld in literature. The literary purpose of isolation commences even before the actual hunt begins as the king leaves most of the usual hunting retinue behind. However, since it is a par force

hunt, the hero, Auferius, becomes separated from his fellow hunters by the more natural process of outriding them. He loses not only his companions but also the deer and, most important of all, his way. Like many a medieval hero in a predicament, he resorts to prayer. In answer to his prayer he is guided to a hostel where he is welcomed by a fair maiden who tells him that he has been led to her for the purpose of engendering a son, Generydes. As she is speaking to him,

Ther come an hert in att the chaunber dore,
 All embosed; the kyng was sore dismayede
 Semyng to hym, as it passed in the flore,
 It was the same he chased in the more;
 This is, thought he, for me some maner trayne;
 And ther with(all) she seyde to hym ageyn:

Be not a ferde of this sodeyn aventur;
 It is for no harme; it is att for your beste,
 . . .

(11. 79-86)

What is implied elsewhere in Middle English romance is explicitly stated here; the deer has been a guide. Its sole purpose has been to guide Auferius to the maiden who will bear him his son Generydes, the hero of the romance.

Elsewhere in the romance, the mobility of the deer hunt is used to propel people to or from scenes of action. Sir Yvell uses the deer hunt to remove the Sultan of Persia and Generydes from the palace so that he can carry out his plan to abduct the heroine Clarionas. He lures her out of the city by telling her that her father, the sultan, wishes her to join the hunting. Ironically, and fittingly, it is the very mobility of the deer hunt that is Sir Yvell's undoing -- at least momentarily. Suspecting treachery,

Clarionas and her maid Mirabell dismount,

And as thei sate to geder complayneng,
 Came Natanell as fast as he myght ride,
 Chasyng an hart as he come Reynyng;
 A none with all Mirabell had hym aspied,
 With her kerche she bekenyd hym aside,
 And he full cutesly left all the chase,
 And streight to hir he come ther as she was.
 (11. 3823-3829)

The hart hunt undertaken by Natanell, Generydes' loyal friend, is apparently part of the hunt organized by Sir Yvell. There is an attempt here to use a deer hunt to facilitate further treachery, but the hunt itself causes the treacherous plans to go astray, at least temporarily. In other romances, too, hunts are used for devious purposes but, as will be seen, they are hunts for the boar, an animal strongly associated with evil.¹⁶

Sir Thomas Malory also uses deer hunts in Morte Darthur to bring heroes into contact with the unknown and unexpected. These hunts, usually placed at the beginning of books, perform a role of initiating momentous events and adventures. In "The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones," Malory differs from his French source by omitting long descriptions of Tristram's ancestry and beginning his account with a hunt that has direct bearing on the circumstances of Tristram's birth.¹⁷ Like the hunt in Generydes, this is also of magical origins. It is instigated by a lady in the country of Lyones

that had loved kynge Melyodas longe, and by no meane she never cowde gete his love. Therefore she let ordayne uppon a day as kynge Melyodas rode an-huntynge, for he was a grete chacer of dere, and there be enchauntemente she made hym chace an harte by hymself alone tyll that he com to an olde

castell, and there anone he was takyn presoner by
the lady that loved hym. (p. 371)

Melyodas' imprisonment causes his wife, Elizabeth, to go searching for him while she is great with child. The journey into the forest hastens Tristram's birth and brings about Elizabeth's death.

When she realizes that she is dying, she tells her lady-in-waiting that the boy should be called Trystram "that is as much to say as a sorrowful birth." (p. 372)¹⁸

It is a strength in Malory that the story of Tristram, who becomes Malory's Arthurian hunter "par excellence," should begin with a hunt related to the locale of his birth. Having been born in a forest, son of "a grete chacer of dere" Tristram appropriately becomes known as "the father of English hunting."¹⁹ In this instance, the hunt is used, as it is in Generydes to isolate a hero from those around him, and also provide a setting not for the engendering of a hero as in Generydes, but for his birth.

In "The Tale of King Arthur," Arthur, after having lain unknowingly with his sister and dreamt a disturbing dream, goes hunting in order to relax and relieve his troubled mind. As soon as the hunting party is in the forest, Arthur catches sight of a hart which he decides to pursue. The chase is so long and hard that Arthur's horse falls down dead, and he is brought another by a retainer. Seeing

. . . the herte unboked and hys horse dede, he sette hym downe by a fowntayne, and there he felle downe in grete thought. And as he sate so hym thought he herde a noyse of howundis to the som of thirty, and with that the kynge saw com towarde hym the strongeste beste that ever he saw or herde of. (p. 42)

The strange beast is the questing or "yelping" beast, the object of all King Pellinor's cynegetic endeavours. Pellinor meets Arthur and forcibly takes his fresh horse. Sending his retainers for yet another horse, Arthur is again alone when he is accosted by Merlin who tells him

ye have done a thyng late that God ys displesed with
you, for ye have lyene by youre syster and on hir
ye have gotyn a childe that shall destroy you and
all the knyghtes of youre realme! (p. 44)

Rather than providing the light relaxation that Arthur wants, the hunt in this case propels him into a state of wonder as he encounters the questing beast and a situation of relative helplessness as King Pellinor takes his horse; thus, Arthur is in a pensive mood and amenable to Merlin's revelation concerning his act of incest and its consequences.

During the celebrations at Arthur's wedding feast at Camelot a hunt intrudes upon the guests as they sit at the Round Table. Merlin leaves no doubt about the purpose of this hunt as he states explicitly that it will connect the fledgling court with a strange and marvellous adventure. Just as the knights are seated according to their rank

. . . there com rennynges inne a whyght herte into the
hall, and a whyght brachet nexte hym, and thirty
couple of blacke rennynges houndis com afftir with a
grete cry. And the herte went aboute the Rounde Table,
and as he wente by the syde-bourdis the brachet ever
boote hym by the buttocke and pulde outte a pece,
wherethorow the herte lope a grete lepe and overthrew
a knyght that sate at the syde-bourde. And therewith
the knyght arose and toke up the brachet, and so wente
forth oute of the halle and toke hys horse and rode
hys way with the brachett.

Ryght so com in the lady on a whyght palferey
and cryed alowde unto kynge Arthure and seyde "Sir,
suffir me nat to have thys despite, for the brachet
ys myne that the knyght hath ladde away."

'I may nat do therwith' seyde the kynge.

So with thys there com a knyght rydyng all armed
on a grete horse, and toke the lady away with forse
wyth hym, and ever she cryed and made grete dole.
So whan she was gone the kynge was gladde, for she
made such a noyse.

"Nay," seyde Merlion, 'ye may nat leve hit so, thys
adventure, so lyghtly, for thes adventures muste be
brought to an ende, other ellis hit woll be
disworshyp to you and to youre feste.'

(pp. 102-103)

The usual movement of the hunt from court to forest is reversed here as the sport is used to bring the outer world deep into the apparently secure court where it makes demands on the court's newly established chivalry. This intrusion of a hunt into the heart of Camelot is similar to that of the Green Knight in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.²⁰ In both cases the court is faced by demands made by outsiders which, by the very force of their presentation, cannot be ignored. In this case the young court is helped by the incidents and adventures that result from the intrusion. Sir Torre chases after the brachet, King Pellinor, now a member of the court, goes in search of the lady, and Gawain hunts the white hart. Upon completion of these adventures, the three knights return to Camelot where

. . . the kynge stablysshed all the knyghtes and gaff
them rychesse and londys; and charged them never to
do outorage nothir morthir, and allwayes to fle treson,
and to gyff mercy unto hym that askith mercy, uppon
payne of forfiture (of their) worship and lordship of
kynge Arthure for evirmore; and allwayes to do ladyes,

damesels, and jantilwomen and wydowes (socour:) strengthe hem in hir rygthes, and never to enforce them, uppon payne of dethe. Also, that no man take no batayles in a wrongefull quarell for no love ne for no worldis goodis. So unto thys were all knyghtes sworne of the Table Rounde, both olde and younge, and every yere so were the(y) sworne at the hyghe feste of Pentecoste. (pp. 120)

The adventures brought about by the hunt allow the court to focus its incipient chivalric code. The completion of the adventures by Torre, Pellinor and Gawain has blooded the court, enabling Arthur to evince confidence as he lays down the code of conduct that will be incumbent on all present and future knights of the Round Table. The startling immediacy with which the world through the hunt, serves notice on the court, suggests a dire need for the formation of the Round Table.

In "Arthur and Accolon," a hunting expedition takes place once more with the conventional movement from the court to the forest. The book opens with Arthur and a retinue of knights out hunting. Once again a great hart appears, this time before Arthur, King Uryence and Sir Accolon of Gawle, thus initiating a chase that separates the trio from the rest of the company. Once again, as with the horse in "The Tale of King Arthur," the horses are so exhausted that they drop dead. The hart then appears before the knights "on a grete watir banke, and a brachette bytyng on his throte; and mo othir houndis come aftir." (p. 137) Unlike the hart in "The Tale of King Arthur," this one is exhausted and is killed by the brachet. King Arthur then blows the prize (the call blown on the hunting horn to announce the death of the hunted animal) and looks around to see "a lytyll shippe all apparayled with sylke downe to the watir."

(p. 137) Arthur, Uryence and Accolon board this vessel to experience further strange adventures in the world of faery. After eating supper they go to separate chambers for the night, only to awaken in different places.

The killing of the deer in both "Arthur and Accolon" and The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell appears to be an act that introduces company from the Other World. The very reappearance of the animal after it has apparently eluded its pursuers heralds the completion of its mission as a guide and announces that its charges, the hunters, have arrived at a predetermined destination. Unlike the hart in Generydes, the hart in "Arthur and Accolon" is, when it reappears, an exhausted animal that is killed by a brachet. The death of the hart in the latter case may signal the dangers that await the heroes as they board the ship and journey into the realms of faery. The image of the brachet biting the hart recalls the brachet that bites the buttocks of the white hart in the melée at Arthur's wedding feast. It is difficult to assign any exact meaning, other than authorial efforts at verisimilitude, or prefiguration, to the actions of the brachets.

Besides the varying correspondences, the hart hunts in Malory, in Generydes and in the Placidus - St. Eustace legend serve one common purpose. They isolate the hero or heroes, thus distinguishing them from the mass of ordinary humanity, and lead them almost imperceptibly into the realm of adventure. D.H. Green in "The Pathway to Adventure," asserts that the appearance of a great hart and the resulting chase not only provide a distraction for the hero

in the work itself, but also serve to preoccupy the audience at a critical moment so that the transition between this world and the magical world of adventure is blurred. To illustrate his point, Green uses a modern day parallel.

Imagine that you have an appointment at an office in a large building unknown to you and that you have to make inquiries as to your way there at the reception desk. Armed with these instructions you set off and because you are determined to find your way and are not distracted you will probably pay such close attention to the details of the meandering corridors that you would be able to find your way there again. But if the reception desk had sent someone with you to conduct you to your appointment you would have been so engaged in polite conversation that the details of your way would almost certainly have escaped you. The presence of a guide is therefore sufficient to distract attention from the route followed and the same applies to the motif of the hunt: the knight follows the animal, but the presence of the animal is enough to draw our attention temporarily away from the hero. Instead of asking a question concerning the knight (where is he heading for? where precisely does he cross into the magic realm of adventure?), we begin to wonder about his quarry (where did it spring from? will it manage to escape the hunter?), and it is precisely at this stage, when our attention is diverted, that the author situates his crucial transition.²¹

Green also points out, quite correctly, that such a use of the hunt became so well-known a convention in medieval European literature that Chretien de Troyes uses "This time-worn motif very consciously and in a novel way" in Erec where the hero, Erec, is conducted to Enide, his mistress, by refraining from participating in the hunt with the rest of the Arthurian court.²²

Like Chretien, Malory also uses the motif of a guide animal in a novel way in "Sir Lancelot du Lake" where Lancelot's attention is gained by a brachet. Riding in the forest

. . . he sawe a blak brachette sekyng in maner as hit had bene in the feaute of an hurte dere. And therewith he rode aftir the brachette and he saw lye on the grounde a large feaute of bloode. And than Sir Launcelot rode faster, and ever the brachette loked behynde hir, and so she wente thorow a grete marys, and ever sir Launcelot folowed. (p. 278)

What appears to be a hunt is something else. The brachet is not part of a hunt, and the "feaute of bloode" that Lancelot sees on the ground is not from an animal but from a knight.²³ In this case it is not a hunted animal but a hunting animal, the brachet, that is the guide. Also the blood that Lancelot sees is not from a deer but from a dead knight. The counterfeit hunt and trail that Lancelot follows leads him into a situation where first appearances are again deceptive. Eventually, Lancelot helps not the dead knight's lady but his opponent Sir Melyot by successfully procuring both cloth and sword from the Chapel Perilous. He also withstands the lady's deceptive invitation to a kiss and escapes from the adventure unscathed.

Christian didacticism and order operate in many of these instances, as the hunt leads heroes into situations where they aid, in some way, the propagation of Christian values and the restoration of good order. In Generydes Auferius as a result of following the hart to the maiden in the hostel, begets Generydes, the Christian hero of the romance. In "The Tale of King Arthur," the chase allows Arthur to meet the Questing Beast, an enigmatic emanation born of medieval mysticism, and then to discover, through Merlin, why he has displeased God. The intruding hunt at Arthur's wedding feast leads three heroes of the nascent Round Table into adventures that allow

the fellowship to focus more clearly on its goals of imposing order and Christian principle on an often chaotic world. In "Arthur and Accolon," three other members of the brotherhood, including Arthur, are led by the hunt into a landscape controlled by evil powers, including Morgan le Fay. There, while losing one of their number in the process, they withstand treachery and restore good order as imprisoned knights are released and one knight, Sir Outlake, is restored to his rightful place. Even the false hunt in "Sir Lancelot du Lake" leads Lancelot to a testing place where he resists the wiles of the sorceress Hallewes and saves the life of the good Sir Melyot.

The use of a deer hunt to bring a hero into contact with the Other World or adventure was not original to the medieval imagination. For instance, similar use of the pastime is made in "Pwyll Prince of Dyfed" a tale in The Mabinogion, a collection of Welsh stories, much of the subject matter of which may well be "causal maybe with the dawn of the Celtic World."²⁴ In this tale, Pwyll, while hunting, becomes isolated from companions, and encounters another hunt conducted by Arawn, King of Annwn, the Celtic version of Hades.²⁵

Tom Peete Cross²⁶ and William Henry Schofield²⁷ think that the guide animal motif present in many medieval European works is immediately indebted to Celtic sources through the Breton lays of Graelent and Lanval in which heroes are brought into the presence of fays by means of the deer hunt.²⁸ M.B. Ogle cites the guide animal episode in the Placidus - St. Eustace legend as evidence that the motif may be oriental, even Sanscrit, in origin. Calling attention

to the legend's early existence in Europe, Ogle declares

. . . it is sufficient to have shown that in a story which cannot possibly be Celtic, and which was well known in the West as early as the 10th Century at the very latest, we find . . . the stag-messenger episode.²⁹

For further support to his claim that the stag-messenger episodes in medieval European literature go beyond Celtic provenance, Ogle cites the episode of King Melyodas' beguilement in Malory's account of Tristan's birth. He draws attention to the absence of this episode in Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan, the Old Norse version of the story or in the Scottish Sir Tristrem, and states that it was probably missing from Thomas' account. Yet, he asserts, if the episode is of Celtic origin this is where it should be found as Thomas apparently used Celtic sources. On the other hand, he shows that the name of Melyodas and the hunting episode are found in the later French prose romance³⁰ and an Italian version of the story, La Tivola Ritonda,³⁷ which he thinks are indebted to classical and ultimately eastern sources. Ogle also cites other non-Celtic animal-messenger episodes from Roman, Greek, Semetic and Indian sources to further his argument.³² Ogle's research into the origins of the stag-messenger episode shows the widespread occurrence of the motif, the use of which in the Placidus - St. Eustace legend and other medieval stories was an adaptation rather than a departure from previous attitudes.

The stag itself was known not only to the Eastern Mediterranean people of pre-medieval Europe, as evinced by the bestiary material, but also to the Celtic and Germanic peoples. Among the Celts, it was

associated with the stag-god Cernunos whose cult was widespread.³³ Among the Germanic people, it was associated with sun worship and also appears to have had particular connections with royalty. Gelling and Davidson in The Chariot of the Sun mention a king of Goths who had his chariot drawn by four stags.³⁴ In discussing the significance of the whetstone found in the ship-burial at Sutton Hoo, David Brown states that it is perhaps

. . . the strangest object in the whole treasure. . .
It is a massive four-sided bar. . . topped with a
twisted iron ring surmounted by a bronze stag
The object has more the appearance of a ceremonial than
a functional thing . . . a symbol of kingly power. . .
possessed of magical powers and religious significance.³⁵

An association of the stag with Anglo-Saxon royalty is corroborated by Anglo-Saxon literature. In Beowulf, the great hall which sits at the centre of an ordered world and which is under constant threat from the forces of chaos is called Heorot or Stag. C.L. Wrenn in his edition of the poem remarks that that Heorot-Stag is connected with the use of the stag as a symbol or royalty.³⁶

In medieval England Richard II's badge of the white hart was a well known, if unpopular, emblem. Inherited from his mother,³⁷ the badge was widely distributed among the king's followers as part of a sumptuous livery that helped to exhaust the treasury, which was then replenished "in contempt alike of justice and mercy."³⁸ The author of Mum and Sothsegger, a political poem written sometime after 1399, combines Richard's use of this badge with information on the stag found in bestiary material. In the third passus of the poem, after having criticised Richard's over-use of the emblem, he states that the worst crimes are those that are perpetrated against nature.

Using Richard's emblem of the white hart, he restates the bestiary legend about the animal's characteristic behaviour of cathing adders, feeding on their venom and thus prolonging its life. Then he states:

This is (clerlie) hir kynde coltis (not) to greue,
 Ne to hurlle with haras ne hors well atamed,
 Ne to stryue with swan pou3 it sholle werre,
 Ne to bayten on pe bere ne bynde him no~~r~~er,
 Ne to wilne to woo pat were hem ny sibbe,
 Ne to liste for to loke pat her alie bledde;
 This was a3eins kynde as clerkis me tolde;

. . . .
 (Passus Tercius. ll. 26-32)³⁹

The sense of this passage is, as Day and Steele suggest, that harts should attack adders (according to bestiary legend) and not colts, horses, swans or bears. All these animals, of course, figure in the heraldry of the various nobles that Richard made his enemies. Taking Richard II's favourite emblem of the white hart, the author dips into the lore of the Bestiary and applying the knowledge found therein about the animal, draws a moral. The image of Richard's white hart is contrasted ironically with its traditional symbolic associations and, with the further use of contemporary heraldic imagery, these associations allow a pertinent medieval maxim -- that of behaving according to kind (nature) -- to be introduced into the argument against Richard. He is reminded that his behavior has been out of harmony with nature -- a weighty argument in an age that believed strongly in the ordered rhythms of the natural world.

The second quality of the stag described in bestiary material, in which the leader of the herd was said to go first in crossing the river and help other weaker deer in doing so, is also alluded to by

the author of Mum and Sothsegger:

On rascaile pat rorid with ribbis so lene,
 For fauzte of her fode pat flateris stelen,
 And euere with here wylis ✕ wast ofte pet hem anoyed,
 Pat pouerte hem prickid full preuyliche to pleyne,
 But where, pey ne wyste ne ho it wolde amende.
 Pus ze derid hem vnduly with droppis of anger,
 And stonyed hem with stormes pat stynted neuere,
 But plucked and pulled hem anon to pe skynnes,
 Pat pe fresinge frost freted to here hertis.
 So whanne zoure hauntlere-dere where all ytakyn
 Was non of perasekayle aredy full growe
 To bere ony breme heed as a best aughte,
 So wyntris wedir hem wessh with pe snowis,
 With many derke mystis pat maddid her eyne.

(Passus Secundus. ll. 119-132)

Day and Steele gloss the above passage: "On the lean-ribbed deer you had small pity. You vexed them, and nearly skinned them; so that when the chief deer failed, none of the leaner ones could stand by you." (p. 10) Once again Richard II's emblem and bestiary material related to the stag are used to advise him of the error of his ways.

The image of a deer fording a river, and giving help as it does so, occurs in The Sultan of Babylon. Coming to a river, Richard of Normandy cannot cross it because the bridge is "ichayned sore" and the giant Alagolofure stands guard over it. Like Auferius in Generydes and many other medieval heroes, Richard kneels in prayer

. . . bisechinge God of his grace
 To save him fro myschiefe.
 A white hende he saugh anoon in pat place,
 That swam over the cliffe,
 He blessed him in Godis name.
 And followed the same waye
 The gentil hende pat was so tame,⁴⁰
 That on pat othir side gan playe.

The animal, appearing evidently in answer to Richard's prayer, brings

with it echoes of both the Celtic guide animal and the stag in the Bestiary -- complete with Christian explication -- as it leads Richard out of danger.

The use of the initial stages of the deer hunt as an avenue to adventure, and the figure of a deer, either stag or hind, as a beneficent leader or guide in Middle English literature appears to be literary motifs of long standing adapted to a Christianized Europe. The outstanding innovation of the medieval hunt was the curée, the ritual ceremony of dismembering the dead animal. Reference to the procedure first appears in the thirteenth-century French hunting manual Chace don Cerf, and in British romance, in Sir Tristrem.⁴¹

As we have seen in Chapter One, an ability to perform the curée correctly was a mark of "woodsmancraft." In the pages of romance, this skill, as a part of hunting, was a central part of a noble education taught to the hero, often by an old retainer. In Sir Tristrem, we are informed that Sir Rohand taught Tristrem

Of ich maner of glewe
And euerich playing pede,
 Old lawes and newe;
 On hunting oft he zede,
 To swiche alawe he drewe
 Al pus,
 More he coupe of veneri
 Pan coupe manerious.⁴²

Similarly in The Lyfe of Ipomydon the loyal retainer, Sir Tholomew, teaches his charge, Ipomydon, all the social graces, of which hunting is one:

Bothe of howndis and haukis game
 Aftir he taught hym, all and same,
 In se, in feld, and eke in ryuere,
 In wodde to chase the wild dere,

And in the feld to ryde a stede,⁴³
That all men had joy of his dede.

The connection between hunting and the nobility, so clearly laid down in hunting manuals and Forest Law, was nowhere more strongly reflected in literature than in instances where authors focus on the hero's ability to execute the curée. In both Sir Tristrem and The Lyfe of Ipomydon it is the hunting prowess of the hero, exhibited through his mastery of the curée, that convinces others of his noble birth. When Tristrem happens upon King Mark's hunters, they are in the final stages of what has been a successful hunt. However, the manner in which they set about butchering the animals causes Tristrem such discomfort that he has to speak out:

Bestes pai brac and bare,
In quarters pai hem wrouzt,
Martirs as it were
Pat husbond men had bouzt.
Tristrem po spac pare
And seyð wonder him pouzt: --
"Ne seiȝe y neuer are
So wilde best y wrouzt
At wille.
Oper," he seyð, "y can nouzt,
Or folily pe hem spille."
(ll. 452-462)⁴⁴

Tristrem's remarks cause surprise among King Mark's hunters who do not know of any other way of cutting up the animal. One of them asks Tristrem to show them how he would do it. Tristrem gladly agrees and in the stanzas that follow there is an account of how Tristrem "made his quarry":

Tristrem schare pe brest,
 Pe tong sat next pe pride;
 Pe heminges swipe on est
 He schar and layd bi side;
 Pe breche adoun he prest,
 He ritt and gan to riȝt;
 Boldliche per nest
 Carf he of pat hide
 Bidene;
 Pe bestes he graiped pat tide
 As mani seppen has ben.
 Pe spande was pe first brede,
 Pe erber diȝt he ȝare
 To pe stifles he ȝede
 And even ato hem schare;
 He riȝt al pe rede,
 Pe wombe oway he bare,
 Pe noubles he ȝaf to mede.
 Pat seiȝen pat per ware
 Al so.
 Pe rigge he croised mare,
 Pe chine he smot atvo.
 Per forster for his riȝtes
 Pe left schulder ȝaf he,
 Wip hert, liver and liȝtes
 And blod tille his quirre
 Houndes on hyde he diȝtes,
 Alle he lete hem se;
 Pe rauen he ȝave his ȝiftes
 Sat on pe fourched tre,
 On rowe;

(11. 474-504)

(Tristrem cut open the breast, the tongue lay next the spleen; he with great delight cut out the hemings (a piece of the hide cut out to make brogues for the huntsmen), and laid it aside. He pressed down the breech, cut it off and dressed it. After that he at once boldly cut off the skin. He then dressed the beasts, as many beasts have since been dressed. The shoulder was the first breadth (?). He quickly took out the bowels. He went to the knees and cut them right in two. He adjusted all the small guts, he set aside the paunch, he gave away the numbles as a reward. Those that were there saw that in that very manner. Further, he cut the backbone crosswise, he cut the chine in two. He gave the left shoulder to the forester as his rights, along with the heart, liver, lights, and blood for the quarry. He set the dogs on the hide; he let them all see. In due order, he gave its gifts to the raven which sat on the forked tree.⁴⁵

Though the details may differ, the general procedure that is described here corresponds closely to the description given in the hunting manuals. The cutting up or "undoing" or "breaking" of the animal demanded very careful attention. After the hunter had proved himself worthy in the art of tracking and killing the animal, he had to prove himself worthy in the area of "woodsmancraft."

It is the skill exhibited by Tristram in the area of "woodsmancraft" rather than the actual chase that impresses King Mark's men. He does not have a chance to prove any skill in the hunt itself because he encounters the hunters after the animals have been killed. It is not certain what manner of hunt has been followed; however, many animals have been slaughtered. The introduction of the curée to Mark's huntsmen by Tristram has caused him to be celebrated in later English literature as the "Father of English hunting."⁴⁶ Besides knowledge of the curée, Tristram is also credited, by Malory, with introducing the terms of venery into England.

And so Trystrams lerned to be an harper passyng all other, And aftir, as he growed in myght and strength, he laboured in huntynge and in hawkyng -- never jantylman more that ever we herde rede of. And as the booke seyth, he began good mesures of blowynge of beestes of venery and beestes of chaace and all maner of vermaynes, and all the tearmys we have yet of hawkyng and huntynge. And therefore the booke (of venery, of hawkyng and huntynge is called the booke of) sir Trystrams. (p.375)

Though Tristram was also known for his ability to hunt, the accent in the quotation above is on his reputation for having founded in England the correct hunting procedure and terminology. Malory

writes that "every day sir Trystram wolde go ryde an-huntynge," (p.682) but nowhere does he give a detailed account of a hunt undertaken by Tristram.⁴⁹ It is Tristram's mastery of the artificial intricacies of the medieval hunt that is seen by Malory as an essential feature of his nobility. Such skills, Malory asserts, ought to secure for Tristram a place of honour among the "jantyllumen."

Wherefore, as me semyth, all jantyllumen that beryth olde armys ought of ryght to honoure sir Tristrams for the goodly tearmys that jantyllumen have and use and shall do unto the Day of Dome, that thereby in a maner all men of worshyp may discever a jantylman frome a yoman and a yoman frome a vylane. For he that jantyllumen is woll drawe hym to jantyllumen tacchis and to folow the noble customys of jantyllumen. (p.375)

In The Lyfe of Ipomydon, a similar mastery of the intricacies of the sport benefits the hero. Ipomydon journeys to Calabria in disguise to satisfy his curiosity about a wonderful princess who had "determined never to bestow her hand but upon a knight who should have proved himself superior in prowess to all knights in Christendom."⁴⁸ When Ipomydon becomes the princess's cup-bearer, his deportment and behavior excite her interest and increase her desire to unravel the mystery surrounding him. She devises a scheme which will help her in discovering whether Ipomydon be of noble stock or not.

She hyr by-thought on a quentyse,
If she myght know, in ony wyse,
To wete whereof he were come:
Thys was hyr thoght, all and some.
She thought to wode hyr men to tame,
That she myght know hym by his game.
On the morrow, whan it was day,
To hyr men gan she say:
"To-morow whan it is daylyght
Loke ye be all redy dight,

With youre houndis more and lesse,
 In the forest to take my grese;
 And there I will myself be,
 Youre game to byhold and see."
 (ll. 359-372)

The princess uses the hunt to confirm suspicions excited by other "jantyll tachis" exhibited by Ipomydon. She is not disappointed since Ipomydon enjoys singular success at the hunt as he brings down more game than all the rest. After the slaughter of the deer there is the final, sure test of Ipomydon's nobility in the performance of the curée.

There squyers vndyd hyr dere,
 Iche man on his owne manere.
 Ipomydon a dere yede vnto,
 Full konnyngly gan he it vndo;
 So feyre that veneson he gan to dight,
 That bothe hym beheld squyer and knyght.
 The lady lokyd oute of hyr pavyloun,
 And saw hym dight the veynson;
 There she had grete dynte,
 And so had all that dyd hym see;
 She saw all that he downe drought,
 Of huntynge she wist he cowde jnoughe,
 And thought in hyr herte than
 That he was come of gentill men.(ll. 397-410)

Now sure of his background, the princess promotes Ipomydon from position of cup-bearer to a seat next to her cousin at dinner.

In both Sir Tristrem and The Lyfe of Ipomydon, the curée is used by the author to establish the hero's noble credentials. Tristrem's introduction of the ceremony to Cornwall so impresses the onlookers that they "alle bliþe" (l. 527) lead him straightway to King Mark. Ipomydon's skill at the ceremony banishes, as we have seen, the doubts of the princess about his social station, who then removes all barriers as she elevates him from cup-bearer to a guest at her table. In both cases, the hero's nobility established by

curée, allows social order to be maintained as he gains access to the foreign court where he then becomes involved in a love affair.

The association between deer hunting and pursuits of love exist in several middle English romances. For example, in "The Knight's Tale" Chaucer uses a hart hunt to effect a meeting between Theseus and the two rivals in love, Palamon and Arcite. Theseus, we learn,

. . . for to hunten is so desirus,
And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth hym no day
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horn and houndes hym bisyde.
For in his hunting hath he swich delit
That it is al his joye and appetit
To been hymself the grete hertes bane,
For after Mars he serveth now Dyane.

Cleer was the day, as I have toold er this,
And Theseus with alle joye and blis,
With his Ypolita, the faire queene,
And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
On huntynge be they riden roially.
And to the grove that stood ful faste by,
In which ther was an hert, as men hym tolde,
Duc Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rideth hym ful right,
For thider was the hert wont to have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
This duc wol han a cours at hym or tweye
With houndes swiche as that hym list comaunde.

And whan this duc was come unto the launde,
Under the sonne he looketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores two.⁵⁰
(11. 1674-1699)

Citing The Master of Game, Oliver Farrar Emerson comments on the realism found in this portrayal by verifying that May was the correct time of year to hunt the "grete hart."⁵¹ Besides taking place at the right time of the year, the measured progression of the hunt as its members "riden roially" to the grove helps to emphasize the ordered world over which Theseus rules. Such a world is

contrasted with the disorder of Palamon and Arcite. The hounds, the horns, and in particular Theseus' knowledge of the probable flight path of the hart are indications that a form of par force hunting is about to ensue. However, the hunt never takes place; the hart is not unharboured. The hunt is used once again to bring a figure of authority and order into contact with the central cause of disturbance and disorder in a work; in this case the central disturbance is the inordinate love for Emily of both Palamon and Arcite. Theseus imposes order on the lovers' struggle by arranging a formal tourney to decide the winner of Emily's hand.

Before the tourney, all three protagonists pray to the gods: Arcite prays for victory to Mars, the god of war; Palamon petitions Venus, goddess of love,⁵² while Emily entreats the chaste goddess Diana to protect her. In her supplication Emily states:

Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire
As keepeme fro thy vengeance and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly.

(11. 2300-2303)

The reference to "Attheon" or Acteon is significant. According to classical mythology, Acteon, while hunting, saw Diana bathing, and consequently was changed into a stag by her and killed by his own hounds. Through Emily's plea for protection from Diana's vengeance Chaucer reminds one that chastity, like love and war, also has a destructive aspect.

In answer to Emily's prayer, Diana appears "with bowe in honde, right as an huntresse," (1. 2347). As goddess of the hunt, the stag was her sacred animal.⁵³ The association of the stag with

Diana, the goddess of chastity and hunting, the holy associations of deer in christianized bestiary material and the legend of Saint Eustace undoubtedly contributed to the appearance of deer hunts in Middle English Romance that lead, apparently inadvertently, to tests of chastity and marital fidelity that are met successfully.

In Sir Gawen and the Carle of Carlisle, a deer hunt leads Sir Gawain, Sir Kay and Bishop Baldwin into a forest where a thick mist causes them to lose their way and to seek the hospitality of the Carl of Carlisle, one of those keepers of castles who prove no easy host for their guests. At the castle, Sir Gawen, having passed a courtesy test in the Carle's stables,⁵⁴ is conducted by the Carle to his wife's bed and told to get into bed with her, kiss her but to "doe no other villanye." As John Speirs remarks, Gawain is successful in this chastity test with which we may compare the testing of Gawain by his host's wife in Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight and the jealousy test of Baldwin in The Avowing of Arthur.⁵⁵ In both, The Avowing of Arthur and Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, deer hunts contribute to the execution of the test by removing the husbands from their wives. In Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight Sir Bercilak undertakes a deer hunt, the first of three hunts after different forms of game, as Sir Gawain, lying in bed at the castle, resists the advances of Sir Bercilak's wife.⁵⁶ In The Avowing of Arthur, Arthur, in order to test Baldwin's vow that he will never be jealous of his wife, arranges that Baldwin be kept out all night on a deer hunt. Arthur addressing his hunter says:

"I commawunde þe to be all nyȝte oute;
 Bawdewyn, þat is sturun and stowte,
 With þe schall he be.
 Erly in þe dawyng,
 Loke þat ȝe come fro huntyng-
 If ȝe no venesun bring,
 ffull litill rechs me."

(11. 802-808)⁵⁷

In the morning Baldwin returns from what has been a very successful hunt as the hunters bring home "hertis . . . And buckes of pride."

(11. 874-875) He discovers a knight lying, albeit innocently, by his wife. Like Gawain, Baldwin is also successful in the test. He fails to become jealous of his wife.⁵⁸

This incident in The Avowing of Arthur is similar in structure to Modred's entrapment of Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's "The Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon." In order to trap Lancelot with Guinevere, Modred, Aggravayne and ten others arrange a hunt for the same reasons that are found in The Avowing of Arthur. Aggravayne instructs Arthur:

. . . "ye shall ryde to-morne an-huntyng, and
 doute ye nat, sir Launcelot woll nat go wyth you.
 And so whan hit drawith towarde nyght ye may sende
 the quene worde that ye woll ly oute all that
 nyght, and so may ye sende for your cookis.
 And than, uppon payne of deth, that nyght we
 shall take hym wyth the quene, and we shall brynge
 hym unto you, quycke or dede." (p. 1163)

In both, The Avowing of Arthur and "Morte Arthur Saunz Guerdon," the hunt serves the purpose of separation and it is deliberately extended into the night so that the wife may take part in illicit love. But in The Avowing of Arthur the husband-hunter, Baldwin, is innocent of any plan to entrap his wife, while in Malory Arthur, the husband-hunter on this occasion, is fully aware of the true

purpose of the hunt, as he is also suspicious of Guinevere's infidelity. This suspicion may indeed influence what is told about the hunt itself. In The Avowing of Arthur, the hunt is definitely a deer hunt. Arthur mentions the word "venesun" in his instructions to the hunter, and later in the poem, Baldwin's success at the hunt is recorded as harts and bucks are carried back in triumph the next morning. In Malory, Aggravayne (leaving the type of hunt unstated) merely tells Arthur to "ryde to-morne an-hunting." After the initial use of the hunt to remove Arthur from the court no more is said about the diversion. The omission of the word "deer" in Malory, and in his sources, the stanzaic Le Morte Arthur⁵⁹ and Le Mort le Roi Artu,⁶⁰ may be deliberate. Knowing that the hunt is an instrument in a plan that will succeed in exposing the illicit love of Lancelot and Guinevere, the authors of the stanzaic Le Morte Arthur and Le Mort le Roi Artu may have thought that specific mention of deer would be inappropriate.

Love, including, but also going beyond, the chastity symbolized by Diana, was an area of human concern with which the medieval deer hunt, particularly in France, had a long association. A detailed study of this association is found in Marcelle Thiébaux's The Stag of Love. Thiébaux points to a tradition in European literature, going as far back as Plato's Sophist, in which the sport provides a dominant metaphor wherein all human affairs are seen as parts of a great chase.⁶¹

Dido in the Aeneid is compared to a stricken hind as she searches for Aeneas.⁶² In the Metamorphoses, the tension between the

literal hunt and the pursuit of love often exists in stories where men and women who resist the urges of sexual love sometimes give themselves to the chase.⁶³ Ovid gives explicit voice to the tension between the chase and sexual love in Remedia Amoris. Counselling that idleness is to be shunned if love's snares are to be avoided,⁶⁴ he recommends that the hunt be used as an antidote.

Vel tu venandi studium cole: saepe recessit
 Turpiter a Phoebi victa sorore Venus.
 Nunc leporem pronum catulo sectare sagaci,
 Nunc tua frondosis retia tende iugis,
 Aut pavidos terre varia formidine cervos,
 Aut cadat adversa cuspidē fossus aper.
 Nocte fatigatum somnus, non cura puellae,
 Excipit et pingui membra quiete levat.
 (Remedia Amoris. 11. 199-206)

(Or cultivate the pleasures of the chase:
 oftentimes has Venus, vanquished by Phoebus'
 sister, beaten a base retreat. Now pursue with
 cunning hound the forward-straining hare, now
 stretch your nets on leafy ridges; either with
 varied panic alarm the timid deer, or meet the
 boar and fell him with your spear-thrust. Tired
 out, at nightfall sleep, not thoughts of a girl,
 will await you, and refresh your limbs with
 healthy repose.)

Ovid's argument that the hunters escape the influence of Venus is, as we have seen, Christianized in the medieval hunting manuals in which the hunter is said to escape the sin of lust by avoiding the sin of sloth.⁶⁵

The hunt is used as a metaphor for describing human affairs by Andreas Cappellanus in De arte honeste amandi, a manual of love, in which the author states that love is a "kind of hunting."⁶⁶ Direct comparisons in which we are told that the pursuit of a loved one has similarities to the chase appear in some Old French poems,⁶⁷ but similar works do not appear (or if they did, have not survived) in

Middle English literature. The closest that the deer hunt comes to being used as a metaphor occurs in Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess.

Most critics of The Book of the Duchess are naturally concerned with the poem's elegiac theme, and the hunt is mentioned only in so far as it contributes to the statement by the critic about the elegiac quality of the poem. Exceptions to this general neglect of the hunt are Oliver Farrar Emerson's article "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," in which the realism of the hunting vignette is discussed, and Marcelle Thiébaux's treatment of it in The Stag of Love.

The hunt in The Book of the Duchess (ll. 345-385) is a royal chase in which the Emperor Octavian pursues a hart par force. The complex affair of hunting par force is not presented at any length, but is used by Chaucer from time to time as it suits his artistic purpose. However, as Thiébaux notes, the chase "fragmented though it is and consigned to less than five percent of the poem, nonetheless works with economy both thematically and structurally."⁶⁸

Most critics agree with Thiébaux's assessment that the two main themes of the poem are love and death, and that the main contribution of the hunt lies in the intended pun in the words: herte-hert.

. . . With a formalized dignity, the chase in the forest discloses to us by the merging of the two near-homonyms, the death of the stag, the hert, and of the beloved, the husband's herte swete. Chaucer's word-play upon the pursued stag and the death-captured heart-hart (these words having their many possible meanings, both in the poem and in Middle English generally) keeps us aware of the double theme. Octovien (sic) conducts his imperial mortal chase for the hert in the distance, while in the foreground the knight mourns his herte's loss: the meanings and fate of each, hart and heart reflect upon each other.⁶⁹

The hunt occurs at the beginning of the narrator's dream and provides, like the hunts in Kyng Alisauder, Guy of Warwick and other works, a vignette of a busy, happy world. The bustle of the huntsmen is the lure that attracts the narrator.

Me thoght I herde an hunte blowe
 T'assay hys horn and for to knowe
 Whether hyt were clere or hors of soun.
 And I herde goynge, bothe up and doun,
 Men, hors, houndes, and other thyng;
 And all men speken of huntynge,

 Anoon ryght, whan I herde that,
 How that they wolde on-huntynge goon,
 I was ryght glad, and up anoon
 Took my hors, and forth I wente
 Out of my chambre; I never stente
 Til I com to the feld withoute.
 Ther overtok y a gret route
 Of huntres and eke of foresteres,
 With many relayes and lymeres,
 And hyed hem to the forest faste
 And I with hem 70
 (ll. 345-364)

Set in a poem the main concerns of which are death and mental anguish, the bustling movement of the hunt, along with the description of a lively spring morning, forms an aesthetically pleasing counterpoint in which life and movement, rather than death and sombre thought, are ascendant. As in Kyng Alisauder, the business and joyful ardour of the pastime contrasts with the inner misery of a particular character in its neighbourhood, the Black Knight. His ignoring of the hunt indicates not only the depth of his sorrow, but also the state of listlessness into which he has fallen.

G.L. Kittredge remarks that the dreamlike effect of the poem is brought about by the naiveté of the dreamer and a number of delicate

touches that are perhaps too elusive to isolate; for example, the announcement that the hunter is the Emperor Octavian, the appearance and disappearance of the whelp, the appearance of the dreamer's horse. Kittredge points out that there is no question raised as to why Emperor Octavian is in the neighbourhood or indeed who he may be. "Thus," says Kittredge "we all remember, do dreams behave."⁷¹

In discussing the personage of Octavian in the poem, Donald C. Baker sees a "substructural link." Referring to the classical origins of the Ceyx-Halcyone episode, he remarks

. . . besides its function as introduction to and parallel of the theme of the poem, its form, the elegiac, is, of course, classical. This atmosphere of the hunting scene serves as a subtle linkage between the Dreamer in his bed reading Ovid and the Dreamer in the forest. For the dreamer is lured into the forest by a "th' emperour Octovyen." Thus the hunting scene itself appropriately introduces the reader into the knightly world which is the setting for the meeting with the knight and for the elegy proper.⁷²

The emperor Octavian is, thus, a bridge connecting the classical world with the world of medieval nobility. His name recalls the world of Rome, while his activity in the dream, that of hunting par force, introduces the world of medieval nobility. By his presence, Octavian increases the "formal dignity" of the chase. Recalling the hunt in "The Knight's Tale," one notes that Chaucer once again depicts a figure of authority out hunting to emphasize a world of authority and dignity. He furthers the orderly aspect of the hunt by mentioning foresters, lymers, and relays, all features that underscore the discipline involved in par force hunting.

Other "delicate touches" associated with the hunt deserve attention. First of all, one must mention the "embosed" deer that appears even before the hunt begins. Huppé and Robertson also mention the dreamlike quality present in the poem and refer to the appearance of the animal as contributing to

. . . at least on the surface, a dream-like air of inconsequence. When the dreamer hears of the hart it is "embosed", but the hunt begins in earnest later, and only then does the hart steal away.⁷³

From the study of the hunt as it is explained in the hunting manuals, the stage of the chase at which the deer became exhausted or "embosed" was naturally at the end, just before the animal was captured and killed.⁷⁴ Therefore, the sudden appearance of the exhausted "embosed" hart at the initial gathering of the hunters at the edge of the forest reminds one that in dreams events and images do not necessarily follow each other in the chronological order of the waking world.

Looking beyond the hunt to the whole poem one notices, however, that the appearance of the exhausted hart at this point is not particularly out of sequence. The harried animal appearing sooner than it should (and perhaps in the realistic context of the hunt it should not appear at all) is surely a product of the dreamer's waking "sorwful ymagynacioun," about which he laments at the beginning of the work, when he describes himself as

. . . feelynge in nothyng,
But, as yt were a mased thyng,
Alway in point to falle a-down;
For sorwful ymagynacioun.
Ys alway hooly in my mynde.
(11. 11- 15)

Thus, the bewildered deer is a logical product of the "mased thyng" that is the waking imagination of the dreamer-narrator. It is fitting that this harried creature, unrealistic though it may be in terms of an actual hunt, should help to lead the dreamer, who has been disturbed himself, to another troubled and distraught person, the Black Knight.

The whelp is another dream-animal that merits attention. Coming to the dreamer as an offshoot of the hunt, it guides him to the sorrowing figure of the Black Knight. Baker calls it an "ingratiating and mournful little dog lost from the chase,"⁷⁵ Beryl Rowland in her article "The Whelp in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," takes issue with critics who see the creature in pleasing terms of "tender relationship" and as a symbol of marital fidelity. She counters these arguments by referring to many other occasions where Chaucer makes use of dogs not by recognizing the tradition of the faithful and affectionate companion but rather by adhering to

. . . the pejorative view favoured both by the Church and by writers of romances and didactic works, a view probably inspired by the half-savage, rabid dog packs plaguing villages and towns. If the whelp in The Book of the Duchess is intended to be an endearing figure, then Chaucer has divorced the animal from qualities such as greed, lechery or ferocity which he gives it elsewhere whenever he associates it with some specific psychological trait.

It is possible that in The Book of the Duchess Chaucer selected a dog from all the other magic tutelary creatures which he might have chosen because of the appropriateness to the hunting scene in an English forest, and it may be that the dog is a simple structural device to effect a transition from the hunt to the elegy, and nothing more. Yet such an explanation does not seem to account for the peculiar effectiveness of the dog's appearance: for the artistic rightness of the scene. If the

whelp has a deeper meaning which is not inconsonant with the considerations already stated, it may be dependent on the fuller context of the passage.⁷⁶

Indeed, a deeper meaning may be accorded the whelp if a "fuller context of the passage" is taken. In order to do so one must look both at the hunt in the poem and descriptions of the sport in hunting manuals, in particular the English hunting manual, The Master of Game.

The most detailed description of the hunt given by Chaucer is its beginning as the narrator-dreamer comes across "a gret oste/ Of huntres and eke of foresteres,/ With many relayes and lymeres, . . ."
(ll.360-362) The lymer, according to the hunting manuals, was a hound whose duty lay in scenting out animals without making any noise. It was, as we have seen in chapter one, a hound that had a developed sense of scent. When a hound was chosen to be a lymer, it underwent special training that included separation from the rest of the hunting pack. Chosen from the kennel, usually at about a year old, it became a companion of its master, sleeping in his room and being taught to obey him at every turn. Thus, the animal was one that was particularly favoured with human companionship. The Master of Game contains instructions that there should also be a lymer near the end of the relays in case there be any danger of losing the deer.

And see that amid the relays, somewhat toward the hinder-most relay, especially if it be in danger, that one of the lymerer's pages be there with one of the lymeres.⁷⁷

These instructions appear to be of English rather than continental origin and are an addition by Edward, Duke of York, to the material

translated from Gaston Phoebus' Livre de Chasse.

Therefore, the whelp that suddenly appears just after the "forloyn" has been blown may possibly be seen as a young lymer that has been posted along the route of the hunt. If the whelp is seen as a lymer, its appearance not only further medievalizes Octavian's hunt, but, also suggests that the locale of the hunt is England. Moreover, if it is a lymer, then its behaviour may reveal further touches of realism in the poem. The dreamer describes the creature as

A whelp, that fauned me as I stood,
That hadde yfolowed, and koude no good.
Hyt com and crepte to me as lowe
Ryght as hyt hadde me yknowe,
Helde doun hys hed and joyned hys eres
And leyde al smothe doun hys heres.
(ll. 389-394)

The description is clearly that of a fawning dog, but, surprisingly, many of the characteristics that are mentioned could also be used to describe an animal that was on the scent of something. The downcast head, the silent creeping and even the ears that are held back are all characteristics of a hound that is on a scent. The particular familiarity with humans would also characterize a limer, a hound that was accorded a more than normal degree of human companionship. The whelp's action when the Dreamer tries to catch it further supports the suggestion that it is a lymer or scenting hound, as it leads the Dreamer through a forest teeming with life to one particular living creature, a man sitting like a harboured animal, under an oak tree. In effect, the whelp unharbours the Black Knight.

The image of the Dreamer following the whelp to the Black Knight would be one that a medieval audience would recognize as that of a hunter with his lymer stealthily unharbouring game. Thus, the groundwork for the herste or heart hunting that the Dreamer undertakes is laid and the literal hunt leads smoothly into the metaphorical one with the whelp-lymer playing a role in both. Though the animal may have been unsuccessful in the literal hunt, it has more success in the Dreamer's metaphorical hunt.

By Socratic investigation the Dreamer begins a restorative process as he persuades the Black Knight, first, to talk about the cause of his misery and then to move towards the castle. There is a cathartic value in the Black Knight's revelation of his past life with his lady, and his movement towards the castle suggests a return to the world of order.

In the prologue to The Parlement of the Thre Ages, there is a hunting episode in which the hunter is a poacher. Consequently, the hunt is, of necessity, not of the par force method but one that is reminiscent of the hunt in The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell. The poacher, like Arthur, successfully stalks and slays his animal, but whereas in The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell there is no mention of the breaking of the deer, in The Parlement of the Thre Ages there is a detailed description of this ritualistic process.

After the successful hunt, the poacher falls asleep and has a dream, the contents of which are the main business of the poem. He witnesses a debate between the three ages of man, Youth, Middle Age and Old Age. Youth is seen as a Waster, one who leads a reckless

life and squanders what he has, while Middle Age is shown to be a Winner, a person who husbands the goods of the world carefully to obtain a measure of security against hard times. Old Age, the final speaker, has the lion's share of the debate and preaches the theme that all is vanity. To emphasize his message that death is the inescapable end for all, he cites the lives of nine worthy men, all of whom are dead. On awakening from this dream, the poacher simply walks away towards a nearby town.

The loose construction of the poem has caused R.A. Waldron to suggest that the episodic development and lack of proportion discourage any attempt to find significance in the relations of the various parts of the work to each other, beyond that of "merest constructional convenience." Waldron asserts that the work has what he terms "pendant structure" with

. . . each section after the first being suspended from the previous one by a seemingly tenuous, ad hoc, narrative thread: the deer poaching adventure of the narrator, in spite of its length seems to serve no more integral purpose than lead up to the dream-debate between Youthe, Medill Elde and Elde which he witnesses after his exhausting hunt; the dream debate in its turn provides for Elde's account of the Nine Worthies. . . . It looks at first sight as if the poem simply exists as a vehicle for the recounting of these stories, to which the first two sections are over lengthy preliminaries.⁷⁸

Waldron, along with other critics, thinks that the poem is not so much about the Nine Worthies as it is about the theme of mutability and a consequent plea for contempt of the world. He maintains that on the surface the deer poaching adventure in the prologue is "curiously incongruous" with the dream vision part. If, however, the prologue has a purpose, Waldron sees three

possibilities. First of all, the arresting opening may be a subtle bait that engages the reader's attention. The human interest evoked by the poacher-narrator may lead a reader to expect a type of Robin Hood story. Secondly, the prologue may be psychologically fitting as a prelude because the dream itself can be seen "as a reflection of the waking activity or preoccupation which precedes it." (p. 791) This reflection is most apparent in the waking activity of the deer poacher and the figure of Youth in the dream who gives an account of a hawking expedition. Hawking was the sister sport to the Medieval Hunt, and both accounts, as Waldron points out, are in the same technical language and "reflect the same pride of craft." (p. 792) Lastly, he sees thematic links between prologue and dream, the most obvious of which is that between a day and a human life. "When the hunter goes into the wood it is just getting light; when he awakes from his dream at the sound of the bugle . . . it is sunset." (p. 794)

Russel Peck proposes that the hunt is connected to the central topic of the poem, which is death. Although the theme of death is not given explicit statement

. . . until Elde holds forth towards the end of the dream, the whole poem is a "parlement" of responses to life's foe. To dramatize the motif at the beginning the poet juxtaposes in the hunt scene two comparable protagonists, the stag and the hunter.⁷⁹

According to Peck, the detailed description of the forest and its creatures at the beginning, even before the hunt, is one of more than a world full of life; the forest is part of a dying world in which all life conducts its activities with great care in order to

survive. The hunt itself depicts the utter futility of trying to find security in the forest.

John Speirs sees the hunt as part of a pattern in the alliterative tradition, of which the work is an example. He looks upon this particular hunt as a sophistication of a convention, stating that the ". . . realistic communication of the experience and excitement of an actual deer-stalking is . . . a late sophistication."⁸⁰ A good example of realism occurs in the detailed description of the poacher at work.

I waitted wiesly the wynde by waggyng of leves,
 Stalkede full stilly no stikkes to breke,
 And crepite to a crabtre and couerede me ther-vndre;
 Then I bende vp my bowe and bownede me to schote,
 Tighthe vp my tylere and taysede at the hert.
(11. 40-44)⁸¹

Speirs also comments on the graphically described sensations in the poem. The poacher dare not move for fear of disturbing the deer. The enforced immobility causes discomfort as the gnats around him prove to be a nuisance.

Then I moste stonde als I stode and stirre no
fote ferrere,
 For had I myn tid or mouede or made any synys,
 Alle my layke hade bene loste pat I hade longe
wayttede.
 Bot gnattes gretely me greuede and gnewen myn
eghne;

(11. 47-50)

The hunter's discomfort is not an isolated example of realism. On slaying the animal he performs a curée which is described in realistic detail. Since the killing was an illegal act, the poacher-hunter then hides the various parts of the animal under ferns and in a nearby oak, and stays in the vicinity to guard his

spoils against the depredations of wild pigs. While on guard duty he has a dream, the contents of which occupy the major part of the poem.⁸²

Does the characterization of the hunter as a poacher play some particular literary role that links the prologue to the content of the dream or is such characterization fortuitous and the prologue merely evidence of "pendant structure"? I think not. Certainly, if the hunter were a member of the nobility with every right to hunt deer, he could still be compared to the figure of Youth, presented as a Waster in the dream,⁸³ and the connection between the hawking Youth's "pride of craft" and the careful curée performed by the hunter would actually be strengthened since both skills would be performed by those who were to the manor born -- nobles. Nor would the hunter's nobility impede the prefiguring of the three ages of man in the dream. The breaking of the deer and the distribution of the spoils would have made an even more apt prefiguration of the careful handling of one's goods and the husbandry of "Medill Elde." A castle would have been just as suitable a place as the banks of a river for the hunter to rest in after his labours. In addition, a full-fledged hunt of the par force variety would underscore well the idea that it was futile to try to find security in the forest.

The reason that the hunter in The Parlement of the Thre Ages is a poacher and not a member of the nobility exercising a noble right lies perhaps in the deer hunt's close connection with the medieval sense of order. The preservation of the hunt as a pastime

setting of the hounds onto the carcass, the spirit of decorum that attended the ceremony is brushed aside as he unceremoniously bundles up the several parts of the animal and hides them away in different places.

Pe fete of the fourche I feste thurgh the sydis,
And heuede alle in-to ane hole and hidde it with
ferne,
With hethe and with horemosse hilde it about,
Pat no fostere of the fee scholde fynde it
ther-aftir;
Hid the hornes and the hede in ane hologhe oke,
Pat no hunte scholde it hent ne have it in sighte.
(11. 91-96)

Once the animal is safely hidden, the poacher, as Waldron points out, behaves very much like the Winner who is described in the following dream. He sits down to guard his booty from the wild swine of the forest, and once again there is an image of a creature on guard duty. By killing the deer and hiding it from the foresters, the poacher is aware that he has cheated that degree of law and order that is man-made and represented by Forest Law and the very sport of hunting par force. At the same time, however, he has been an instrument of order himself. In killing the deer he has helped Death, the mainstay and chief weapon of Universal Order.

In line eighty of the poem, the narrator states that he "Cuttede corbyns bone and keste it a-waye." Peck in referring to this line states that the

. . . casual gesture of cutting the "corbyns bone" amidst the hunter's busy activity seems at first no more than [sic] a mere superstition" almost a reflex action. Yet it reflects a whisper of death in the recesses of his mind, a thought which will become the central concern of his dream. . . . After paying homage to the raven, the hunter takes numerous other precautions as well⁸⁵

The ceremony of the "corbyns" or raven's bone was an interesting part of the curée. According to hunting lore it was to be put up in a tree for the ravens. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, where a curée is also described, line 1355 reads "and pe corbeles fee pay kest in a grene." In his article "The Breaking of the Deer in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", Henry Savage comments:

In the first place there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the reading "in a grene" here, as Dr. Morris does when he suggests the substitution of "on a grene." According to Chace dou Cerf the fee was put on a tree⁸⁶

Marcelle Thiébaux's "The Medieval Chase" mentions that the os corbin or escorbin was to be placed high in a tree as the raven's portion. She also remarks that except for La Chace dou Cerf, the French hunting manuals such as Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio do not state that the bone was to be reserved for ravens. She writes, "Besides La Chace dou Cerf, the other works that call it the ravens' fee are chiefly English."⁸⁷

Mention of the raven's bone⁸⁸ occurs elsewhere in Middle English. The treatise on hunting in The Boke of St. Albans mentions this part of the curée and links it to death.

And bigynnes pen first. to make pe herbere
Then takes oute the shuldres. and slittes anone
The ball to pe nether ende fro corbyns bone
That bon is corbyns fe
At pe deth he wil be

. . . .

(11. 293-296)⁸⁹

In Sir Tristrem, the hero is careful to observe the custom

Houndes on hyde he diztes,
Alle he lete hem se;
Pe rauen he zaue his ziftes,
On rowe

. . . .

(11. 500-504)

In the notes to his edition of Sir Tristrem, George McNeill remarks that according to medieval superstition the raven was

. . . a bird whose form was a favourite among those departed spirits who wandered about the earth in search of embodiment which they had lost. Necromantic powers were ascribed to it, and it is probably due to this superstition that huntsmen ought to conciliate the bird by giving it a share of their spoil as the raven's right.⁹⁰

Thus, in a way, this giving of the "corbyns bone" was a placation of Death. Rightfully, if hunting lore were to be observed correctly, the bone should have been set up in a fork of a tree or on a branch. One is uncertain if this procedure is followed in The Parlement of the Thre Ages since the bone is merely "keste . . . a-waye" (l. 80). If the bone is just thrown away, in a "reflex action" as Peck suggests, it would be an action based only on the knowledge that the act was always done, without any realization of its significance. Even here the poacher fails perhaps to observe the curée fully; in this case, the only impediment would be a lack of knowledge. Though order is observed in the dismembering of the animal, the various parts cannot be distributed, and in the one instance, that of the raven's bone, where the ritual could have been followed, it may not have been done properly. The poacher is not aware, it seems, of the connection between the raven's bone and the souls of departed spirits, though more than a "whisper of death" must have been in his mind with the freshly slain carcass of the animal before him.

In his present condition, the poacher-hunter understands only one level of order -- the man-made level embodied in Forest Law.

This level is one that he can deal with successfully. In the flush of victory, he sits down by the hidden remains of the deer and has a dream which makes him aware of another order that is above and rules all men. In this dream the figure of Elde is an emissary of a universal order in which all things must die. He does not bother to join in the argument between Youth and Middle Age; he just reminds them of the ever present, inescapable fact of death. The length of the section on the Nine Worthies emphasises his message. No matter how great a man may become, death waits for him; there is no evading it. As Phillipa Tristram explains:

The luckless stag in The Parlement, who falls victim to the poacher, prefigures that inescapable point at which all men become prey to time and to mortality.⁹¹

The poacher awakens a much wiser man; though he can evade laws made by man, he cannot evade the law that all mankind eventually obeys. The earthly gains that he has been at so much pain and risk to acquire, he now rejects. The carefully hidden and hitherto closely guarded spoils of the deer are apparently left and forgotten in the realization of the dream's true meaning. Awakened by the blast of a bugle, he looks around, gets up and walks toward town, wiser for his experiences in which both the hunt and the dream have had their allotted roles.

Therefore, the deer hunt, though occupying only the first hundred lines of the poem, is not merely an over-lengthy prelude to the dream vision but is an integral part of the process of enlightenment that the poacher-hunter undergoes. In this hunt there is yet another variation in the positive connection the sport of deer hunting has with the theme of order in Middle English literature.

In The Awntyrs off Arthure at The Terne Wathelyn, a deer hunt once again provides contact with the supernatural by bringing members of the Arthurian court, particularly Guinevere (Gaynour), face to face with the figure of her mother. Rising out of Tarn Wadling, the now-dead mother comes to warn Guinevere about pride and the transitoriness of life. The poem opens with a lively description of a hunt.

In the tyme of Arthur an aunter bytydde,
 By þe Turne Wathelan, as þe boke telles,
 Whan he to Carlele was comen, that conqueror kydde,
 With dukes and dussiperes at with e dere dwelles,
 To hunte at þe herdes þat had ben hydde,
 On a day þei hem dight to þe depe delles,
 To fall of þe femailes in forest were frydde,
 Fayre by þe fermyson in frithes and felles.
 Thus to wode arn þei went, þe wlonkest in wedes
 Bothe þe kyng and þe quene,
 And all þe doughti bydene,
 Sir Gawayn, grayþest on grene,
 Dame Gaynour be ledes.

Thus Sir Gawayn þe gay Gaynour he ledes,
 In a gleterand gide þat glemed full gay -
 With riche ribaynes reuersset, ho so right redes,
 Rayled with rybēes of riall aray;
 Her bode of a hawe huwe, ho at here hede hedes;
 Of pillour, of palwerk, or perrē to pay;
 Schurde in a short cloke þat þe rayne shedes;
 Set ouer with saffres soþely to say,
 With saffres and seladynes sercled on e sides;
 Here sadel sette of at ilke,
 Saude with sambutes of silke
 On a mule as þe mylke,
 Gaili she glides.
 (11. 1-26.)⁹²

The vivid description of Gaynour's glittering apparel as she rides with the hunting party stresses the courtly recreational aspect of the hunt. Not surprisingly, it is not a par force hunt but the hunt with "stables," that takes place. Though this kind of hunt is not as complex as the par force method, Arthur rides about

overseeing the placement of the hunters.

And Arthur with his erles earnestly rides,
 To teche hem to her tristes, pe trouthe for to telle.
 To here tristes he hem tauzt, ho pe trouth trowes.
 (11. 33-35.)

Arthur, as Ralph Hanna suggests, uses the activity not only as recreation but also for training and discipline:

. . . he views the hunt as a ritualised and regally ordered action in which the commander disposes his troops as he sees fit, directing them to the proper hunting stations. . . . because of the emphasis on the directions which the king gives, Arthur's hunt seems to be partially an exercise in regulation or propriety.⁹³

Arthur not only views the hunt as a surrogate for martial training but sees the pastime as "solas" (l. 65). Such a scene of a royal court at its ease is undoubtedly what Richard Fitzneale had in mind when he wrote that hunting parks were primarily for recreational refuge, a place where king and nobles could relax away from the worries of the world. In contrast to the gay, glad Arthurian court, the poem focuses attention on the frightened female deer, the object of deer hunting in "pe fermyson":

All the dure in pe delles,
 Pei durken and dares.

 Pen durken pe dere in pe dymme skuwes,
 And for drede of pe deth droupes pe do.
 (11. 51-54.)

The discomfort of the animals at the invasion of the hunting party into Inglewood Forest is soon transferred to the hunters as a storm comes up and the apparition of Guinevere's mother rises from the lake. Essentially, the ghost seeks to remind Guinevere of pride, symbolized by her costly garb, and the transitoriness of her

earthly state.

For al pi fressh foroure,
 Muse on pi mirrour;
 For king and emperour,
 Thus dizt shul ye be.

'Pus deth wil zou dizt, thare you not doute;
 Pereon hertly take hede while pou art here.
 Whan pou art richest araied and ridest in pi route,
 Have pite on pe poer while pou art of power.
 Burnes and burdes pat ben besy pe aboute,
 When pi body is bamed and brouzt on a ber,
 Pen lite wyn pe light pat now wil pe loute,
 And pen helpes pe noping but holy praier.

(11. 166-178.)

The apparition's admonition recalls the argument put forward by St. Bernard and other clerics that hunting could be, and often was, part of a way of life which might endanger one's chance of salvation. The reference to the embalmed body on a bier juxtaposed to the image of Guinevere riding "richest araied" in the hunting procession reminds one of the "ubi sunt" theme.

Good use of the "stable" variety of deer hunting is made by the poet. Using the opportunity afforded by the sport, he portrays a glittering court riding in full pride, exercising its royal right in the apparent safety of reserved lands. However, before it can exert its earthly dominion over the animals in the forest, the court is interrupted by one from beyond the grave; even in the security of its hunting parks the court, like Sir Isumbras, cannot escape the supernatural. Though the Arthurian court may impose and observe earthly order, it must be reminded to heed heavenly injunctions if its members, once having journeyed through this life, are to escape the trials of purgatory. The deer hunt is used once again to reveal cosmic order.

Positive allegorization of deer and deer hunting in hunting manuals such as Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio and beneficent Christian explication of earlier bestiary material, appears ultimately to have influenced the appearance of the animal and the sport in Middle English literature. In some works the joys of deer hunting help to portray a world in which order and harmony reign, while in other works the pastime is used to serve the purpose of isolation as the hero is removed from his companions. Outriding his companions, the noble figure confirms his worth as he often affirms or establishes order directly or indirectly in the realm of adventure. The deer guide animal motif appears to be of immediate Celtic provenance, and ultimately further afield. In the case of the hunt that intrudes on Arthur's wedding feast, the outer world surrounding Camelot makes known the demands that it will place on the young court, thereby helping the gathering to set its rules of conduct -- rules that essentially aim at protecting and restoring order in an often turbulent world. Along with the animal's Christian associations, the classical tradition of the stag as the symbol of Diana, the goddess of hunting and chastity, may have influenced the use of deer hunts in Middle English literature to lead heroes to tests of marital fidelity and chastity that are met successfully.

Though the nature of par force hunting made it an apt vehicle for describing the pursuits of love, such analogy was not made in England as directly as it was in France. In The Book of the Duchess, the one poem in which a hart hunt parallels the love hunt of a

heart, a devoted husband mourns too excessively the loss of a beloved wife. The chase after an "embosed" hart leads a figure of authority, the narrator-dreamer to the bereaved Black Knight, where through questioning and dialogue a catharsis is achieved and order is restored.

Finally, in The Parlement of the Thre Ages and The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn supernatural order is revealed and confirmed. In The Parlement of the Thre Ages a deer hunt plays a significant role in leading a hunter-poacher to the realization that though Earthly order, embodied in the Forest Law and curée, may be overcome and mastered, there is an inescapable universal order to which all mankind must succumb. In The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn, the hunt with "stables" shows the Arthurian court, in splendid complete control over terrestrial matters, reminded by the spectre of Guinevere's mother of obligations in the moral and religious spheres.

The many instances in which deer and deer hunts represent or help establish order suggest a connection with the firm place that the animal held in medieval cosmology on the side of the Good.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BOAR AND

THE BOAR HUNT

Queen Ratio's unequivocal allegorization of the boar as a satanic figure¹ shows a significant departure in attitude from that of earlier European cultures. The animal's great courage that had once gained the admiration of the Celtic and Germanic peoples made it, in medieval Europe, an opprobrious figure seen to embody several of the Seven Deadly Sins. In shifting schematizations of a European culture increasingly pervaded by a Christian cosmology, the animal was placed on the same moral plane as the arch enemy of the medieval Christian, the Anti-Christ. The medieval boar afforded fierce opposition to a hunter. The hazardous task of hunting the creature naturally brought a sense of danger to the literary boar hunts. Its satanic associations allow the danger to extend beyond the physical into the moral realm.

Medieval hunting manuals are explicit in describing the physical dangers of hunting the boar. Edward, Duke of York, succinctly describes the animal in The Master of Game.

It is the beast of this world that is the strongest armed, and can sooner slay a man than any other. Neither is there any beast that he could not slay if they were alone sooner than that other beast could slay him, be they lion or leopard, unless they should leap upon his back, so that he could not turn on them with his teeth. And there is neither lion nor leopard that slayeth a man at one stroke as a boar doth, for they mostly kill with the raising of their claws and through biting, but the wild boar slayeth a man with one stroke as with a knife, and therefore he can slay any other beast sooner than they could slay him. It is a proud beast and fierce and perilous, for many times have men seen much harm that he hath done. For some men have seen him slit a man from knee up to the breast and slay him all stark dead at one stroke so that he never spake thereafter.²

The comparison with lion and leopard, beasts that roamed the landscape of the medieval imagination,³ magnifies the dangers of the boar hunt. The greatest danger came from the animal's tusks. They were weapons with which the creature could wreak havoc on its opponents, both canine and human. According to the hunting manuals, many hunters and their hounds were gored, usually fatally. In The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting, George Turberville discourses at length on the animal's ability to decimate a pack of hounds.

[The boar] is the only beast which can dispatch a hounde at one blow, for though other beasts do bite, snatch, teare, or rende your houndes, yet there is hope of remedie if they be well attended: but if a Bore do once strike your hounde and light between the foure quarters of him, you shall hardly see him escape: and therewithall this subtiltie he hath, that if he be runne with a good kennel of houndes, which he perceyueth holde in rounde and followe him harde, he will flee into the strongest thicket that he can finde, to the ende he may kill them at leysure one after another, the whiche I have seene by experience oftentimes. And amongst others I sawe once a Bore chased and hunted with fiftie good houndes at the least, and when he sawe that they were all in full crie, and helde in rounde together, he turned heade upon them, and thrust amidst the thickest of them. In suche sorte that he slewe sometimes sixe or seuen (in manner) with twinkling of an eye: and of the fiftie houndes there went not twelue sounde and alieue to their Masters houses. Agayne if a kennel of houndes be once used to hunte a Bore, they will become lyther, and will never willingly hunte fleing chases agayne.⁴

In light of such information, one can understand why, in certain parts of Europe, the best hounds were dressed at times in coats of mail to protect them from the ravaging tusks.⁵ Understandably, such a perilous pastime was also recorded in literature. In The Romance of Partenay a particularly disastrous boar hunt is described at length.

Tho began the chace strong and myghtly;
 The best for noyse A-forn the hundys ran,
 The houndes sewing after ful strongly;
 The Erle thaim sewed and spored lyghtly,
 Of whom anon shal you declare and say
 Where hym cam tho gret mischef and afray;

For never after he ne cam againe,
 Raymounde hym sewed As moche As he myght,
 As for to leue hym ne wolde he certayn;
 Of thaim to it fil As ye sall know ryght.
 In the forest fought thys swyne euery wyght,
 Which in columbre bred and fed trulye;
 The mone ther rose; the swyne ther houndes slye,

Ther ded to grounde thaim cast myghtilye.⁶
 (11. 135-148)

Having lost many of their hounds and outridden the rest of
 the hunting party, Raymond and Amery find a retreat and rest awhile.
 As they are warming themselves by a fire

The wod breke and rent ful heuily tho;
 Then Raymond his swerd gan to gripe fersly,
 And the Erle his in that other party to.
 leuing the fyre which ful clere brend, lo!
 Then afor them saw ny to them comyng
 An huge bore of meruelous wreth beyng,

With tuskes tho whettyng ful strongly,
 And with malice yre comyng, fast smytyng;
 "My lord, save your lyf and ward yow quiklye,
 here vppon a tre wyghtly be clemmyng;"-
 With hie hautyng voice the erle answeyng,
 "I never was repreued at no stound,
 Ne here shal not be neuer shuch wise founde.

Were it plesaunce to god I shold hens fle
 As befor A pigge of A fowle sowe, lo?"
 Towardes the swine hys swerd fast shoke he;
 Raymound vnderstode his worde hym noyed tho.
 Thys sayd Erle tho went to launce hym vnto,
 And when it came so, the swerd went adon;
 Thys swyne to the Erle forth faste ran anon;

By mischef ther thys noble Erle gan die;
 The Erle hym ne myght no lenger ther hym hold.
 By myschef thys swyne smot hym feruentlye;
 But hys swerd in hym entre ther ne wold,
 There he moste of horse fal to his tuskes bold,
 (11. 226-250)

Raymond rushes to the earl's defence, but his first stroke also glances off the animal. Finally he manages to kill the boar by a stroke through its belly, but it is too late; the earl has been killed.⁷ There is irony in this scene as the hunters, who have given up the hunt and are at their ease around a fire, suddenly become the hunted. The attack also serves as a dramatic example of the workings of Fortune, which is referred to earlier by the poet as cruel and false, and which is also the subject of the earl's musings as he interprets the stars (ll. 198-203).

The difficulty that both the earl and Raymond experience in piercing the boar's hide is true to life. Its thick hide contributed to the animal's defence. In romance, spears splinter against the animal without effect. In The Avowing of Arthur, the huntsman in talking about a baleful boar in the neighbourhood tells Arthur "on him spild I my spere" (III, l. 9);⁷ later Arthur himself gives battle to the beast and in the process his spear "The grete schafte that was longe Alle to spildurs hit spronge." (XIII, l. 5)⁸ In Sir Eglamour of Artois, Sir Eglamour rides fast towards a boar, hoping to spear the animal through sheer force of impact but "Hys good spere asownder brast." (l. 389).⁹ In Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Beves tackles a boar with a spear with much the same result.

A spere Beues let to him glide;
On pe scholder he smot pe bor,
His spere barst to pises fore;
Pe bor stod stille azen pe dent,
His hyde was harde ase eni flent.
(ll. 788-792)¹⁰

In Sir Degrevant, the tough hide of the animal is put to good use as Melidor in regaling the hero, Sir Degrevant, brings ". . . fram pe

kychene/ A scheld of a wylde swyne,/ Hastelettus in galantyne;/
 . . ." (ll. 1413-1415)¹¹ The "scheld" of the wild boar was the
 tough skin, found particularly at the shoulders, which was used as a
 case in which to cook more tender meat, in this instance the
 "hastelettus" or entrails.¹²

If the tough hide was an effective defensive weapon, the
 creature's tusks were, as we have seen from the hunting manuals,
 formidable in attack. Consequently, in some descriptive accounts of
 boar hunts, where the physical characteristics of the animal are at
 times exaggerated into the realm of fable, it is the tusks that are
 singled out for particular mention. In Sir Beues of Hamtoun the
 description of a wild ravaging boar includes four central lines that
 describe the animal's tusks:

A wilde bor par was aboute,
 Ech man of him hadde gret doute,
 Man and houndes, pat he tok,
 Wip his toskes he al to-schok.
 Pei him hontede kniztes tene,
 Par of ne 3ef he nou3t a bene.
 At is moup fif toskes stoden out,
 Euerich was fif enches about,
 His sides wer hard and strong,
 His brostles were gret and long,
 Him self was fel and koupe fizte,
 No man sle him ne mizte.
 (ll. 739-750)

The five-inch tusks in this description pale in comparison to those
 possessed by the boar in Sir Eglamour of Artois. In the B.M. Cotton
 Caligula A.II manuscript version of the romance, we are told that

In Sydon, pat ryche countre,
 Per dar no man abyde ne be
 For dredyng of a bare:
 Best and man, all sleys he
 That he may with ye se,
 And wondes pem wondur sore.

His tusschus passen a 3erd longe:
 Pe flesch pat pey fasten amonge
 Hyt coueres neuyr more.
 (11. 349-357)

In different manuscripts of this romance the tusks are of varying, though always monstrous, size.¹³

An animal long indigenous to Europe, the boar had a secure place in the mainstream of European culture by the high Middle Ages. The creature's ferocity and courage made an indelible impression among the Celts, the Germanic tribes and the Mediterranean peoples. The traditions of all three groups, together with the later influence of medieval Christianity, affected the various treatments the animal received in mythology and literature.

Among the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, the boar was associated with the principle of death in the seasonal struggle of life and death. As a result, many of their gods, such as Osiris, Adonis and Attis, were victims of the animal. In ancient Egypt, the boar was looked upon as the embodiment of the god Set, the Egyptian equivalent of the devil; consequently, Ra, the sun god, declared the animal to be abominable. In Greek mythology the Babylonian god "Adon" is depicted as a fair youth who is loved by Aphrodite, the goddess of love. He is killed either by a boar or by the jealous Ares who, like the Egyptian god Set, is able to turn himself into a boar in order to kill his rival.¹⁴ The story of Aphrodite (Venus) and Adonis was retold by Ovid in Metamorphoses.¹⁵ Accidentally grazed by one of Cupid's arrows, Venus falls in love with Adonis. Hunting only timorous beasts herself, she warns Adonis

. . . 'in audaces non est audacia tuta.
 parce meo, iuvenis, temerarius esse periclo,
 neve feras, quibus arma dedit natura, lacesse,
 stet mihi ne magno tua gloria. non movet aetas
 nec facies nec quae Venerem movere, leones
 saetigeresque sues oculosque animosque ferarum.
 fulmen habent acres in aduncis dentibus apri,
 impetus est fulvis et vasta leonibus ira,
 invisumque mihi genus est.'

('but against bold creatures boldness is not safe.
 Do not be rash, dear boy, at my risk; and do not
 provoke those beasts which nature has well armed,
 lest your glory be at great cost to me. Neither
 youth nor beauty, nor the things which have moved
 Venus, move lions and bristling boars and the eyes
 and minds of wild beasts. Boars have the force of a
 lightning stroke in their curving tusks, and the
 impetuous wrath of tawny lions is irresistible .
 I fear and hate them all.)¹⁶

Adonis, however, ignores her advice; on his next hunt, he is killed by a fierce boar with long tusks. Ovid also relates the story of Oeneus, King of Calydon, who, in thanking the gods for a bountiful harvest passes over Diana's altar. Outraged, she sends a boar to avenge her. Ovid's description of this boar is demonic and comparable to accounts of boars in some medieval romances where at times the connection between Satan and the animal is made explicit.

sanguine et igne micant oculi, riget ardua cervix:
 et setae similes rigidis hastilibus horrent:
 fervida cum rauco latos stridore per armos
 spuma fluit, dentes aequantur dentibus Indis,
 fulmen ab ore venit, frondes afflatibus ardent.

(His eyes glowed with blood and fire; his neck was stiff and high; his bristles stood up like lines of stiff spear-shafts; amidst deep, hoarse grunts the hot foam flecked his broad shoulders; his tusks were long as the Indian elephant's, lightning flashed from his mouth, the herbage shrivelled beneath his breath.) pp. 426-427

The animal wreaks havoc throughout the land of Calydon. Meleager organizes a great hunt as the beast ravages all around him, including several of the hunters. Finally, Meleager plunges his spear through the beast's shoulder and proceeds to award the head of the dead animal to Atalanta, thus causing jealousy and discontent among the other hunters. Meleager, like many medieval heroes, here restores order by killing the boar, but ironically causes further jealousy among the hunters.

It is in Celtic literature that one finds a lengthy description of an exceedingly devastating boar hunt. In "Culhwch and Olwen," one of the eleven stories of the Mabinogion, the second boar hunt extends over three countries (Ireland, Wales and Cornwall) as a series of battles ensues with Arthur and his hosts struggling against a mighty family of boars, Twrch Trywth and his sounders. The object of the hunt is not to kill the boar but to take from its head certain parts of the animal referred to as its "comb," "razor" and "shears." After a lengthy process of attrition in which many of Arthur's followers and all of Twrch Trywth's sounders die, the last prize, the "comb," is taken and the boar is driven out of Cornwall "straight forward into the sea."¹⁷ Though we learn that Twrch Trywth had been a king whom God had transformed into a swine on account of his wickedness, the connection with evil is somewhat mitigated when one reads the boar's speech to Gwrhyr, Arthur's emissary who is, himself, in the form of a bird.

"By Him who made us in this shape, we will neither do nor say aught for Arthur. Harm enough hath God wrought us, to have made us in this shape, without you too coming to fight with us."

"I tell you, Arthur will fight for the comb, the razor and the shears which are between the ears of Twrch Trywth." Said Grugyn, "Until first his life be taken, those treasures will not be taken. And to-morrow in the morning we will set out hence and go into Arthur's country, and there we will do all the mischief we can." (pp. 131-132)

A great boar capable of vast destruction, there are nevertheless, significant differences between Twrch Trywth and the Calydonian boar. The unnamed boar ravaging the Calydonian countryside is a purely destructive manifestation of a goddess' anger, a sign of vengeance, as it lays waste the countryside of men. The great boar, named Twrch Trywth, which has also had contact with deity, carries with it in "Culhwch and Olwen" no qualities of epiphany. The struggle in the story is of earthly genesis -- that of possession; the poem is concerned primarily with the obtaining and defence of property. The most prized objects wished for by the giant Ysbaddaden belong to Twrch Trywth, and they must be obtained for Culhwch to get the hand of Olwen in marriage. Consequently, the boars are not deliberate, wanton perpetrators of misfortune, but creatures defending themselves, and the ensuing struggle is the result of a swift defensive counter-attack. There is no moral overtone of righteousness triumphing over evil in Arthur's victory; his success is necessary for the completion of the tasks that have been set.¹⁸ The struggle is a titanic one between matched, valiant forces in which Arthur, as the eventual winner, gains glory. The determined ferocity of the boar is used here as a foil; it is a great animal setting in motion a great hunt that is worthy of a great man, "the sovereign prince of the island," the protector of the people.

In Celtic Heritage, Alwyn and Brinley Rees show the connection between the boar hunt in "Culhwch and Olwen" and stories in early Irish literature, particularly those dealing with the warrior-captain Finn, and his followers the fiana:

. . . boar hunts have a prominent place in the Fenian literature. An account of a great boar-hunt in which all the fiana of Ireland took part is the prelude to the story of Finn's death, and Diarmaid's destiny is bound up with the life of a magic boar whose human origin and venomous bristles recall Twrch Trwyth.¹⁹

The story of Diarmaid also involves the metamorphosis of a human into the great magic boar of Ben Gulban, Diarmaid's destined slayer.²⁰

Anne Ross in Pagan Celtic Britain discusses the role of the boar in Celtic culture and cites tales of various legendary boars of supernatural origin and enormous size that figure in Celtic tradition.²¹ She concludes:

. . . The frequency in the earlier tradition with which the pursuit of enchanted and enormous swine is the subject matter for a legend suggests that, unlike the sacred bull of Persian tradition, slain by the god Mithras, the sacred Celtic animal which was ritually hunted and slain was the boar. The animal seems then to have been symbolic of fertility (agricultural and sexual) and of war. In it were contained all the passions of the Celtic peoples -- hunting, feasting, fighting and procreation. It was an animal form appropriate to the gods, a food fitting for the otherworld feasts of the Celtic heroic world.²²

Arthur's victory over the great boar and the Celtic tradition in which boars in general were seen in a positive light undoubtedly helped establish a tradition in which he is referred to as the Boar of Cornwall, a title of martial excellence. Geoffrey of Monmouth,

in the Historia Regum Britanniae, refers to Arthur by this title.

In writing about the struggle between the Britons and the invading Saxons, Geoffrey prophesies:

. . . Aper etenim cornubie succursum prestabit.
colla eorum sub pedibus suis conculcabit.
Insule oceani potestati ipsius subdentur.
gallicanos saltus possidebit. Tremebit romulea
domus seuiciam ipsius. exitus eius dubius erit.
In ore populorum celebrabitur. actus eius! cibus
erit narrantibus.²³

(The Boar of Cornwall shall bring relief from
these invaders, for it will trample their necks
beneath its feet.

'The islands of the Ocean shall be given into the
power of the Boar and it shall lord it over the
forests of Gaul.

'The house of Romulus shall dread the Boar's
savagery and the end of that House will be
shrouded in mystery.

'The Boar shall be extolled in the mouths of its
peoples, and its deeds will be as meat and drink
to those who tell tales.)²⁴

Merlin's prophecies, promulgated by Geoffrey, were included in the
Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester (1294).

Ac 3et schul pe Britones som tyme a3eyn stonde,
For pe bor of Cornewall schal helpe pis londe,
And po Saxnes hedes vnder fet trede.
Mony yles wyne he schal, lond and oper stude,

. . .
Po Cornewaile's bor, of wam he spek, pat was
kyng Arthure,
Pat so wel huld vp pis lond, and ys fon ouer com,
Pat poru ys nobley wan mony a kyngdom.²⁵

(pp. 132-133)

In this instance, the boar is seen as an image of protection and
restoration of British honour and martial greatness. The
association of the boar image with a mighty, protective ruler is not
confined to Arthur. In the annals of medieval English political
prophecy, particularly strong and aggressive rulers are called "aper

Anglicus." Henry V, Richard I and Edward III were accorded the title at various times. In Middle English poetry perhaps the most extensive identification of the king of England with a boar is found in the "Fragment of an Alliterative Poem Containing Thomas-a-Beket's Prophecies." This poem, which refers to events in the reign of Henry V, tells of a tower that King Charles of France has ordered to be built. After having laid the foundations, the workmen find a mysterious letter on a stone:

'masterles men, yhe this tour make;
 A Bayre sall come out of Berttane wytth so brode
tuskis,
 He sall trauyll up yhour towre, and your towne
per efter,
 And dycht his den in pe derrest place pat
euer aucht kynge charl[es.]'
(11. 49-52)

The workmen stop work for "drede of the bayre" (l. 59). On hearing this story, Becket kneels before a statue of Our Lady to enquire "Qweper of berttaine pat is braide, sall pis ber Ryse." (l. 62). The answer to his question is yes, and Becket has the tower finished

". . . agayne the bere Ryse;
 If he hynttis ony harme as he hydder wendis,
 At he may Rest Perin, wyth his Rethe tuskis.
 Pat man sall be makless, for mercy hime folows."
(11. 69-72)

Once again the image of a boar represents an English ruler and is connected with the glory and martial success of England; moreover, in this case there is also a degree of heavenly approbation.

The figure of the boar as a patriotically beneficent force was not uniquely Celtic. A similar attitude towards the animal is evident in Germanic culture and literature. In Beowulf, heroes wear

boar helmets for a protection that goes beyond the physical.

. . . Eofor-lic scionon
ofer hleor-ber[g]an: gehroden golde,
fah ond fyr-heard, ferh weorde heold:
gup-mod grummon. (ll. 303-306)

(The boar crests glittered above the helmets: adorned with gold, bright and well-tempered, it [the figure of the boar] stood guard over men's lives. The hearts of the warriors were filled with excitement.)²⁷

Here the image of the boar is a symbol of a protective force that guards its charges against the perils of the unknown. In writing about references to the boar in Beowulf, A.T. Hatto states that "the boar in the early Germanic world has fundamentally to do with protection and defence."²⁸ The recurrent images of snakes and boars in the poem

. . . take us back to a world of magic realism, in which it is only to be expected that aggressive magic will be paired with defensive. Abundant evidence that the latter role was filled by another animal [other than the snake, the magic of which was aggressive] can only confirm the general correctness of this approach. That defensive agent was the boar. (p. 155)

Later in the same article, Hatto discusses the use of the eofor heafodsegn (12152), or boar standard, and succinctly describes how fitting it was that a Germanic battle standard should show the image of a boar.

. . . Like Germanic heroes, the boar was at his most magnificent and dangerous when ringed by his enemies at his last stand, like them he attained to his true greatness in tragedy. No animal displays more desperate courage when brought to bay, as hunters of former ages well knew. On the defensive he was the most formidable beast in Europe. In Homer he ranked with the lion. When a Germanic war-band was surrounded and outnumbered it was expected to fight around its leader to the last man. What greater

inspiration than to be ranged around the
Boar? (p. 156)

In Das Ebersignum in Germanischen, Heinrich Beck shows that the image of the boar was one that was closely allied to warfare in the culture of the Germanic peoples. Its appearance on helmets, shields, swords, spears and battle-standards was widespread.²⁹ The animal's courage and fearlessness in the face of danger was indeed an inspiration to a people inhabiting an ever-hostile world.

The great admiration felt for the animal's behavior when it was surrounded by enemies is reflected in Layamon's Brut (ca. 1200). Layamon elaborates at times on material found in his immediate source, an Anglo-Norman metrical chronicle by Wace; often his elaborations include comparisons to boars. In describing a fight between the French King Goffar and Brutus, Wace merely writes, "E quant Brutus se combratreit/ Al matinet, del bois saldreit." (ll. 989-900).³⁰ (And when Brutus was fighting in the morning, he went forth from the woods.) In Layamon, there is more than a perfunctory description of the action.

Amorwe po hit dazede: and dai com
to folke.
Brutus was abolze: also pe wilde bor.
wane hundes nine bi-stondep: in pan
wode-londe.
Brutus hehte his cniptes: don an hire
brunies.
and hire wepne gode: for hii to
fifte solde.
(ll. 849-854)³¹

(On the morrow, when it dawned, and day came to the folk, Brutus was enraged, as the wild boar is, when hounds surround him in the woodland. Brutus commanded his soldiers to put on their cuirasses and their good weapons, for they should go forth to battle.)³²

Layamon's comparison of Brutus to a hunted boar is not merely an addition but an anglicization of the work. It is one of many passages in which we find preserved "the spirit and the style of the Anglo-Saxon writers."³³ The boar simile is an apt description for portraying Brutus' desperate situation. Like many Germanic heroes in similar circumstances, he summons his men to rally round, and, outnumbered though they be, to sally forth and fight. In doing so, Brutus and his warriors break through the encircling forces of Goffar, reach the coast and put to sea for England. The strategy is similar to that of a boar which when cornered would attack the encircling hunters thus effecting its escape on occasion. The boar simile suggests the desperate courage of Brutus and his men, and aids in depicting them in particularly Anglo-Saxon terms of a lord and his thanes battling against an encircling hostile world.

Further boar similes are found in other elaborations of Layamon. As Corineus and Geomagog wrestle

laðliche læches: heo leite[d]en mid eȝan.
Al was heora gristbatinge: al swa wilde
bares eȝe.
Whil heo weoren blake: ladliche ibu(r)ste:
Whil heo weoren raede: hehliche wenden,
heora eiper wilnada: oðer to waelden.
mid wiȝeleden mid wrenchen: mid
wunderliche strengðen.
(11. 944-949)

(. . . They flashed loathly glances with their eyes! Their gnashing of teeth was all like the wild boars rage. At times they were black and loathly swollen, at times they were red, and highly enraged. Each endeavoured to conquer and kill the other, with wiles, stratagems and wondrous strength.)

The boar simile accentuates the struggle and emphasizes that it is a fight to the finish. Similarly, when Arthur battles Childric, Layamon again adds a boar simile to help describe Arthur's ferocity.

Arður mid his sweorde: faeie-scipe wurthe.
 al þat he smat to: hit wes sone for-don.
 Al ~~was~~ þe king abolȝen: swa bið þe wilde bar.
 Penne he; þan ~~mæste~~: monie [swin] imeteð,
 Pis is ~~is~~ Childric: gon him to charren.
 (11. 10607-10611)

(Arthur struck bitter strokes with his sword;
 all that he smote at was soon destroyed. The king was
 enraged like a wild boar, when he meets many swine in
 the beechwood. Childric saw this and began to flee,
 he went over the Avon to save himself from harm.)

In both instances, the boar similes emphasize the wrath of the combatants, reminding one of the Norse tradition of the berserker, a warrior who passes beyond reason into a mad lust for battle, thus gaining an almost supernatural prowess that sometimes saves him.

The defensive magic associated with the boar can also be seen in Anglo-Saxon medieval lore wherein various parts of the animal, soaked in wine and honey, are prescribed as medicine for a range of diseases from sores and snakebite to the healing of wounds and epilepsy.³⁴ Such an association of the boar with medicinal properties continued into medieval England where one finds mention of them in both the hunting manuals and the romances. There is an attempt to explain the medicinal value of the boar's flesh in

The Master of Game.

. . . They [the boars] live on herbs and flowers especially in May, which maketh them renew their hair and their flesh. And some good hunters of beyond the sea say that in that time they bear medicine on account of the good herbs and the good flowers that they eat. . . . (p. 48)

In romance, one finds certain characters longing for the creature's flesh because of its curative powers. In Richard Coer de Lion, the hero suffers from ague. While his leeches are trying to effect a cure

To mete hadde he no savour
 To wyn ne watyr ne to lycour
 But afftyr pork he was alonged.
 But, though hys men scholde be hongyd,
 They ne myghte, in that cuntree,
 For gold, ne sylvyr, ne no monee,
 No pork fynde, take, ne gete,
 That Kyng Richard myght ought off eete.³⁵

In Sir Beues of Hamtoun a similar longing, this time specifically after boar's flesh,³⁶ is expressed by Sir Guy's wife who feigns sickness. When asked by Sir Guy if there is anything that would help combat her fever, she answers: "3e . . . of a wilde bor/ I wene, me minep boutte far,/ Al of pe feure!" (ll. 184-186)³⁷ The feigned sickness and desire for boar's flesh sends Sir Guy into the forest where he falls foul of an ambush and is killed.³⁸

The animal's ferocious mien and courage impressed the medieval Europeans just as it did their ancestors. Consequently, the boar simile found in chronicle material that is often of earlier genesis is also encountered in medieval romance, as admiration accorded the animal for its courage is transferred to a hero. In Middle English literature such boar similes are a convention. In the romance of Clariodus, the narrator elicits sympathy for the combatants by using such a simile. At the beginning of the romance, when Clariodus battles the Lombard champion, the author writes

Undantounit beine thair nobill hearts nee;
 As foaming boares, in their melancholie

They bet on utheris birnies cruellie 39
 So long enduring without disconfitur.
 (Bk. I, ll. 70-74)

Later on, Clariodus battles the jealous Sir Leonard Perdew, and we are told that "Thay strake at other with thair swordis bright./ As two wyld boaris ironslie they fought." (Bk. 5, ll. 2324-2325)

In Le Morte Arthur, the author uses a boar simile when describing the struggle between Sir Lancelot and Sir Mador which was

. . . so wondur stronge a fyghte,
 O fote nolde nouthur fle ne founde
 Frome loughe none tylle late nyght,
 Bot gyffen many a wofull wounde.
 Launcelot than gaffe a dynte with myght,
 Syr Mador fallys at laste to grounde.
 "Mercy," cryes that noble knyght,
 Fore he was seke and sore unsound.

Though Launcelot were breme as bore,
 Full stournely he ganne upstande;
 O dynte wolde he smyte no more,
 Hys swerd he threwe oute of hys hande. 40
 (ll. 1591-1603)

It was an exceptional man who could fight as ferociously as a boar without going berserk. Lancelot's self-control in this combative situation contrasts with his actions elsewhere in the poem. On the battlefield he is in exceptional control of himself while in the courts of love he is not.

Apart from actual combat, boar similes may emphasize strength and fierceness of character. In Lybeaus Desconus, Mangys is ". . . gryme to discryve./ He berreth on every browe/ As it were brystillus of a sowe." (ll. 1310-1312.).⁴¹ In Sir Ferumbras, the Saracen Ferumbras is described in hyperbolic terms that include comparison to a boar. He

. . . wax wrop on his herte
 and bente hym brymly as a bor: and vp hym gan to sterte;
 wan he stod appon þe ground: huge was he of lengþe,
 Fifteuene fet hol and sound! and wonderliche muche
 of strengþe.
 Had he ben in cryst be-leued! and y-vollid on e
 haly fant,
 A bettre knyȝt þan he was preued: Po was þer
 non lyuand:
 (11. 544-549)⁴²

Later, having been bested by Oliver, Ferumbras becomes a Christian. That the boar simile should be applied to him while he is still a Saracen has a particular significance, as we shall see.

Perhaps the best known instance in Middle English literature where two opponents are described as fighting like wild boars occurs in The Canterbury Tales. In "The Knight's Tale," Chaucer writes of Palamon and Arcite

There nas no good day, ne so saluing,
 But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,
 Everich of hem heelp for to armen oother
 As freendly as he were his owene brother;
 And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
 They foynen ech at oother wonder longe.
 Thou myghtest wene that this Palamon
 In his fightyng were a wood leon,
 And as a cruel tigre was Arcite;
 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
 That frothen whit as foam for ire wood.
 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.⁴³
 (11. 1649-1660)

Robinson points out that this combat between Palamon and Arcite is dealt with differently in Boccaccio's Teseida, the main source for the story, in which Arcite is soon unhorsed and rendered unconscious; on recovering, he demands that the fight resume but it is soon interrupted by the arrival of Duke Theseus.⁴⁴ In Chaucer the association of the adversaries with fierce animals and the climax of these associations in the final simile of "wilde bores" underscores

the stubbornness of both combatants and accentuates the desperate unrelenting attitude of each lover. This image of the two lovers fighting like boars points forward to the long and bitter struggle in which no quarter is given and accentuates the disordered state of mind into which both the lovers have fallen. In a poem where order is unceasingly imposed by Theseus, Chaucer's use of the boar simile to describe lovers disordered by love is an effective contrast to the ordered world represented by the ordered par force deer hunt.

There is not so much admiration as sympathy evoked by the boar simile. Two knights, pale-faced like hunters on a lion or bear hunt, nevertheless arm each other in a civilized manner, even though they cannot bring themselves to greet one another (ll. 1637-1653). Once the fighting begins all vestiges of civilized behaviour vanish as they struggle "up to the ancle" in their own blood.

In the Romance of Partenay, two wild boar similes exhibit different attitudes to the animal. The first occurs when the king of Bohemia is fighting for his life against encircling enemies.

But the kyng was noght put Abake only,
 But he had ynow hys life to deffende,
 Here and there caste down, fighting ful manly,
 On all for-smete, Another to ground wende,
 As A wyld boor deffendyd hym at ende.
 Ryght As at bay stode thys manly good knight,
 Full fore were thay hurte whom he Approche myght.

But with A shotte off A launcegay tho
 Thys noble knyght smetyn thorough hys body
 Full felonesly And cruelly also,
 That to mortal deth fill doun sodenly,
 Fro body went the soule ful heuily;
 To our lord An hy commaunded was she,
 For A worthy man certes was he.

(ll. 2101-2114)⁴⁵

Later Geoffrey, essentially a Christian hero, becomes enraged on hearing that his brother Fromont has become a monk.

Off malice And wreth had in his body
 he uomed And swatte, A swine resembling;
 Neuer man non hym beheld ueryly
 But of huge drede ther he were tremblyng.
 "Ther tho ill," he sayd, "thys lechorus being,
 Thes fals monkes, which full uicous be,
 They haue now, by the holy trynite,

My brother Fromont haue enchanted sure,
 A monke haue made, certes, in their town.
 (ll. 3214-3222)

Though Fromont meets him and tells him that he, Fromont, has become a monk of his own free will, Geoffrey sets fire to the monastery at Maillezais, killing a hundred monks, including Fromont, in the process.

The images that these two similes evoke have significant differences and belong to two quite different schools of thought concerning the boar. The first image, in which the king of Bohemia is portrayed defending himself as courageously as a boar when cornered, is similar to the images of Arthur, Clariodus, and Lancelot. There is approbation for "thys manly good knight" who meets his end on a lance, like many a boar. Being a "worthy man" his soule is commended to "our lord." In the second simile, Geoffrey, who up to this point has been a christianissimus rex, having just returned from slaying a monstrous giant, persists in his uncontrollable "wreth" on hearing that Fromont has become a monk. After having burnt down the monastery and killed the monks, Geoffrey comes to his senses and laments his actions. Geoffrey, "a swine resembling", gains no sympathy in the second simile because it is not a question of courage in the face of odds but one of lack of

control, leading to unwarranted destruction and aggression.⁴⁶ The second image associating swine with destruction and disorder, belongs to a Christian tradition of allegorical imagery in which the boar is closely associated with Satan and sin.

If the more sympathetic treatment of the boar, inherited from Germanic and Celtic cultures, is dominant in early English chronicle material, it is the medieval Christian interpretation of the cosmos, in which the boar is seen as an associate of evil, that is paramount in Middle English romance. Though some heroes are likened to boars in descriptions that emphasize heroic valour, in Middle English romance the boars that figure in actual boar hunts are not recipients of any sympathy or moral respect. They are seen either as Satan himself or as emissaries of Satanic forces at loose in a world caught up in the struggle between good and evil.

Justification for such an association of the animal with evil was to be found in holy writ. References to the boar and swine in the Bible are anything but complimentary. Psalms 80:13 reads:

"The boar out of the wood doth waste the vine of Israel"

In the New Testament Christ admonishes his followers in the Sermon on the Mount: "neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

(Matthew 7:6) Hebraic pronouncements on the animal in the Old Testament are absolutely uncompromising -- the animal was unclean,⁴⁷

The boar of Psalms 80, a ravaging animal reminiscent of Diana's boar of Calydon, is given an interesting interpretation in the fragmentary Icelandic physiologus (ca 1200.).

Davidð maelir í psalmi: "Glataði hana goltr úr skogi." Sumir vilja gólt penna vera Vespasi [an] um, Rómverja höfðingja, er sigraði Gyðinga með orrustu, eða son hans Titum, er niðr braut alla Jerusalem. En flestir menn vilja skilja vera djöful, er gekk úr skogi heiðinna þjóða at glata Gyðinga folki.⁴⁸

(David says in the psalms: The boar destroyed her Israel. Some want to judge that boar to be Vespasian, the chief of the Romans when he conquered the Jews or his son Titus when he brought Jerusalem low. But most men want to interpret it to be the devil when he went out of the woods of the heathens to destroy the Jewish people.)⁴⁹

The boar, once interpreted as Vespasian or Titus -- particular enemies of the Jews, is now interpreted as the devil, the enemy par excellence of the medieval Christian. In T.H. White's The Book of Beasts, a translation of a twelfth century Latin bestiary, there is a short passage on the boar.

We get the name of APER the Wild Boar from its savagery (a feritate), by leaving out the letter F and putting P instead. In the same way, among the Greeks it is called SUAGROS, the boorish or country pig. For everything which is wild and rude we loosely call "boorish."⁵⁰

The treatment of the boar in the well-disseminated bestiary material of medieval Europe is in accord with the treatment given the animal in other writings and thought of the times. Its satanic connections in holy writ make understandable the animal's symbolic associations. In the concept of the Seven Deadly Sins, an idea, prevalent in the Middle Ages, the boar is strongly associated with the sins of wrath, lechery and gluttony, those particular sins in which lack of self-control and restraint lead to uninhibited physical action. In her book Animals with Human Faces, Beryl Rowland links the attribute of wrath to that of madness and Satanic possession.

She refers to the story of the Gadarene swine found in the "Gospel According to Saint Mark" wherein Christ cures the possessed by allowing the demons inhabiting their bodies to transfer themselves to the bodies of a nearby herd of swine (Mark. 5). Because of this example,

. . . swine could represent either madness or wrath, a quality closely associated with madness in medieval times -- hence such proverbial expressions as "wod (mad) as a wild boar," "bristly (enraged) like a boar." The boar became the steed of Wrath in John Gower's procession of the Seven Deadly Sins⁵¹

The natural ferocity exhibited by the animal, which was admired and respected by the Celtic and Germanic peoples, causes the animal to become a symbol of excess and self-destruction in the Christian culture of medieval Europe. Gunnar Brusewitz cites Konrad von Megenberg's Buch der Natur in which

. . . the wild boar is depicted as symbolizing the wicked man who refuses to repent and instead remains forever in his state of black and midnight sin. Its tusks are curved inwards, towards each other, so that it injures itself first when it attempts to injure others.⁵²

Not only the boar's ferocity, but also its excessive appetite came under Christian condemnation. In the Ancrene Riwe, a devotional work of early Middle English provenance, the Seven Deadly Sins are embodied in various animal images. The writer of the work admonishes his "leoue sustren," members of a religious order to

Goð, þauh, ful warliche; iðisse wildernesse
beoð monie vuele bestes: liun of prude,
neddre of attri onde, vnicorne of wreððe,
beore of dead slouhðe, vox of ȝiscunge, suwe
of ȝiuernesse, scorpion mid te teile of
stinkinde lecherie: pet is, golnesse

(Go, however, very cautiously: for in this wilderness there are many evil beasts -- the lion of pride, the serpent of venomous envy, the unicorn of wrath, the bear of dead sloth, the fox of covetousness, the swine of greediness, the scorpion with the tail of stinking lechery, that is lustfulness. . . .)⁵³

Awareness of the voracious porcine appetite was nothing new to medieval England. Beryl Rowland cites the early Greek natural historian Aelian who observes that "The pig is sheer gluttony, spares not even its own young, and if it comes across a man's body it does not refrain from eating it."⁵⁴ The swine's appetite and aggressiveness combined to make the animal a particular menace in the everyday life of medieval Europe. Swine not only ate the bodies of dead men but were also known to attack the living, particularly children. Contemporary records refer to incidents in which children have been killed and swine have been arrested for their murder. The image of a sow devouring a child is one of several used by Chaucer when describing scenes of rapine on the walls of the temple of Mars.

Yet saugh I Woodnesse, laughynge in his rage,
 Armed Complaint, Outhees, and fiers Outrage;
 The careyne in the busk, with throte ycorve;
 A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm ystorve;
 The tiraunt, with the pray by force yraft;
 The toun destroyed, ther was no thyng laft;
 Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
 The hunte strangled with the wilde beres;
 The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
 The cook yscalded, for al his longe ladel.

(The Knight's Tale, ll. 2011-2020)

Chaucer once again uses porcine imagery in depicting an uncivilized world. Just as the wild boar image contributes to the contrast between the disordered microcosmic world of Palamon and Arcite and

the ordered world of Theseus, the image of child-eating sow aids in depicting a world ruled by unbridled "woodnesse." It is a world of Mars in which the massive destruction and disorder created by war is the antithesis of the ordered chivalric world represented Duke Theseus.

In explaining the Hebraic injunction on the eating of pork, Clement of Alexandria states that swine were associated with "boundless lust, greed, and aggressiveness."⁵⁵ In Lydgate's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, a translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's Pelerinage de la vie humaine, the figure of Gluttony in talking about her "two stomachs" Drunkenness and Greediness, states that they are kin to Venus.

"I haue tweyne, as thow mayst se,
Wych ben ful nyh (who kan espye,)
Off the kynrede and allye
Off Venus; ffor lykerousnesse
Off welfare, and gret excesse,
Engendre and cause naturelly
ffleshly lust and lechery.
(11. 13036-13042)⁵⁶

Drunkenness and greediness are said to cause lechery, and Venus, we are told, rules all gluttons. Right after this revelation by Gluttony, Venus makes an appearance riding a wild boar.

I sawh a-noon wher that Venus
Kam rydyng on a swyn savage,
And in hyr hand, a ffals vysage
I sawh hyr bern, fful brood and large,
To-fforn hyr Eyen, lyk A targe.
And thys Venus trew(e)ly
Was Arrayed queyntly;
ffor hyr clothys and hyr array
Defoulyd wern with donge and clay,
. . . .

(11. 13090-13098)

Venus, as in classical mythology, is an enemy of chastity ("I chace a-way al chasyte" l. 13123), but gone is the beautiful figure of Aphrodite-Venus and in her place appears a hag. The boar, once the servant of the goddess Diana, the goddess of Chastity, as it ravaged the forests of Calydon and gave Adonis a fatal thigh wound, here becomes the steed of Diana's enemy, Venus.

The boar's association with lechery also appears to have the support of holy writ. In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon states: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout so is a fair woman which is without discretion." (Proverbs 11:22.) It would appear that Chaucer alludes to this proverb in "The Wife of Bath's Prologue" when he refers to "the Parables of Salomon" (l. 678) that are among Jankyn the clerk's favourite reading as he struggles for mastery with the Wife of Bath. In "The Parson's Tale", there is an explication of this proverb. In talking of women, the good Parson states

. . . that God of his endeless goodnesse hath set hem
in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body,
heele, beautee, prosperitee,/ and boghte hem
fro the deeth with his herte-blood, that they so
unkyndely, agayns his gentillesse, quiten hym so
vileynsly to slaughtre of hir owene soules./
O goode God, ye wommen that been of so greet beautee,
remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon. He seith:/
"Likneth a fair womman that is a fool of hire body
lyk to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a
soughe."/ For right as a soughe wroteth in everich
ordure, so wroteth she hire beautee in the stynkyng
ordure of synne./

(ll. 152-156)

The placing of the golden ornament in the sow's groin rather than its nose recalls the sexual overtones of Adonis' thigh injury, and makes even more definite the "fair" woman's association with lechery.

Elsewhere in Chaucer, there are similes involving swine that have lecherous implications. In "The General Prologue" to The Canterbury Tales the miller is

. . . a stout carl for the nones;
 Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.
 That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,
 At wrastlyng he wolde alwey the ram.
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre;
 Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
 Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and thereon stood a toft of herys,
 Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
 His nosethirles blake were and wide.

(ll. 545-557)

In discussing this portrait of the miller, in Chaucer and the Mediaeval Sciences, W.C. Curry points out that medieval physiognomists saw short stocky characters as people who were quick to anger, and that warts, particularly those on noses, denoted lecherous people.⁵⁷ Though Curry does not mention the two sow similes in this description, they also help to paint the picture of a man given to wrath and lechery. In Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde, Troilus

. . . leyde hym down to slepe,
 And so byfel that in his slep hym thoughte
 That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
 For love of here that hym these peynes wroughte;
 And up and down as he the forest soughte,
 He mette he saugh a bor with tuskes grete,
 That slepte ayeyn the bryghte sonnes hete.

And by this bor, fast in his armes folde,
 Lay, kysyng ay, his lady bryght, Criseyde.
 (Bk. V, ll. 1233-1241)

The dream presages Criseyde's unfaithfulness and her union with Diomedes. Beryl Rowland's assertion in Animals with Human Faces that

Here, the image of the boar has little to do with lechery; its heraldic significance is bravery and boldness. The mention of Meleager, his love for Atalanta, and the jealousy of the hunters, places Troilus' jealousy and distress within the framework of human history and, to some extent, presages Troilus' final vision from the eighth sphere.

Besides the animal's connection with disorder and excess, exemplified by the sins of Wrath, Gluttony and Lechery, other unsavoury associations concerning the boar were prevalent in medieval Europe. One such association concerned those who were seen to be the enemies of Christ. There were many stories of children, who, because they mocked the Child Jesus, were turned into swine; consequently⁵⁸ the animal came to be identified with Christ's persecutors. To the medieval Christian the main persecutors of Christ were the Jews. Thus, as Beryl Rowland states, "As Christ's persecutors, the Jews . . . came to be identified with the animal which, in accordance with Mosaic law, they abhorred."⁵⁹

Oppressors within the pale of Christendom were also compared to boars and hogs. In the Song of the Husbandman, a political song of complaint written during the reign of Edward I in the late thirteenth century, the husband laments:

Nede y mot spene that y spared 3ore,
 Azeyn this cachereles cometh thus y mot care;
 Cometh the maister budel brust ase a bore,
 Seith he wole mi bugging bringe ful bare,⁶⁰

The boar image lends force to the complaint by vivifying the brute force and greed of the oppressive master beadle. The Dominican, John Bromyard, is scathing in his attack on the rich who he claims

are, like the pig, only valuable when they are dead. In addition, seneschals and bailiffs, the intermediaries for the oppressive rich, come under attack:

[They] think and say the foulest things, and act after the manner of hogs that are always ready to wallow in filth: like hogs too, they are always eating. What is left over or what they can lay their hands on -- that properly should be set aside as alms -- they carry off for their concubines and other dishonest persons . . . Are they not admirably portrayed by hogs?⁶¹

It was a short step from the link with evil human beings, whether they be Christian or not, to allegory in which boars represented sin in general and even Satan himself. In early medieval English church sculptures priests are often depicted as hunters in pursuit of boars. For example, at St. Mary's parish church near Torquay, the hunter-priest, wearing chasuble, pursues a boar and blows the horn of salvation. The symbolism is unmistakable; the church, represented by the hunter-priest, is pursuing uncleanness and sin, represented by the boar.⁶² As we have seen, such allegory found its way into hunting manuals such as Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, where the animal is damned as a creature of the Anti-Christ.

Such pejorative associations of the boar not only heavily influenced the use of boar imagery, but also the boar hunt in Middle English literature. In some romances the connection between the animal and the Anti-Christ is stated explicitly as the animal is portrayed in demonic terms, even to the extent, on occasion, of being labelled "Satanas." The Avowing of Arthur, Sir Eglamour and Sir Beues of Hamtoun include boar hunts in which the animal becomes

the object of a quest rather than a hunt. In these romances, the creature is not so much an ordinary, though strong, animal to be hunted as it is a destructive monster that must be put down. In each case the hunted boar is given proportions that place it somewhere between myth and reality, and the defeat of the animal signifies yet another triumph of the Christian hero over the forces of darkness. The particularly Christian boar hunts in these romances have certain characteristics in common. The baleful aspect of the animal, its unnatural surroundings, and the fact that it takes a somewhat formulaic battle and a final resort to prayer to vanquish it, give the beast demonic dimensions and the encounter definite moral overtones.

In Sir Beues of Hamtoun, the hero, having just returned from fighting the Saracens is relaxing in the care of king Ermyn's daughter, but it is not a state of affairs that is to last for long. The narrator declares:

His oper prowessse who wile lere,
 Hende, herknep, and 3e mai here!
 A wilde bor par was aboute,
 Ech man of him hadde gret doute,
 Man and houndes, pat he tok,
 Wip his toskes he al to-schok.
 Pei him hontede kniztes tene,
 Par of ne 3ef he nou3t a bene.
 At is moup fif toskes stoden out,
 Euerich was fif enches about,
 His sides wer hard and strong,
 His brostles were gret and long,
 Him self was fel and koupe fizte,
 No man sle him ne mi3te.
 Beues lay in is bedde a nizt
 And pou3te, a wolde kepen is mi3t
 Vpon pat swin him self one,
 Pat noman scholde wip him gone.

(11. 737-754)

The scene is set for what follows -- a heroic struggle between a Christian hero on the side of righteousness and a demonic boar.

Beves goes to the woods, ties his horse to a tree and blows three blasts on his horn to announce his arrival. He journeys to the boar's den where a hellish scene awaits him.

Po he com to pe bor is den,
A sez per bones of dede men,
Pe bor hadde slawe in pe wode,
Ieten here flesch dronke her blode.
(11. 777-780)

Beves' journey to the den, the bones of the dead men and the short, vivid description of their fate all point to this being no ordinary animal but rather a personification of evil. This idea is reinforced in the lines that describe Beves' challenge to the creature.

'Aris!' queþ Beues, 'corsede gast,
And ȝem me bataile wel in hast!'
Sone so pe bor him siȝ,
A rerde is brosteles wel an hiȝ,
And starede on Beues wip eien holwe,
Also a wolde him have a-swolwe;
. . . .
(11. 781-786)

The challenge "Aris . . . corsede gast" and the answering stare of the boar "wip eien holwe" reinforce the supernatural aspect of the encounter. The ensuing battle follows a formula that is calculated to heighten suspense by divesting the hero of his one earthly advantage, that of reach.

A spere Beues let to him glide
On pe scholder he smot pe bor
His spere barst to pises pore
Pe bor stod stille aȝen pe dent
His hyde was harde ase eni flent
Now al to-borste is Beues spere,

A drouz his swerd, him self to were,
 And fauzt azen pe bor so grim,
 A smot pe bor and he to him.
 Pus pe bataile gan leste long
 Til pe time of euensong,
 Pat Beues was so weri of fouzte,
 Pat po pe bor was also,
 Awai fro Beues he gan go,
 Wiles Beues made is praier
 To god and Mari, is moder dere,

(11. 788-804)

The twice-stated fact that Beves' spear is broken serves to underline his disadvantage against so strong an enemy. He is forced to come to close quarters and fight the "bor so grim." However, the boar is no Grendel and Beves no Beowulf; the battle, having lasted all day, is a stand-off. The strength of Beves' arm is enough to allow him to hold his own, but it is not enough to defeat the enemy. The struggle, we are told, has lasted until "euensong." The mention of this time calls to mind the holy church and its ability to protect the suppliant human soul through the hours of darkness. It is from this quarter that help may well be expected in an encounter against the forces of darkness. Beves prays to God and the Virgin Mary, resumes the fight with the boar, and the struggle which has lasted all day with no outcome now ends with dispatch.

. . . come pe bor azen
 And bente is brostles vp saunfaile,
 Azen Beues to zeue bataile;
 Out at is moup in aiper side
 Pe foim ful ferli gan out glide;
 And Beues in pat ilche venev,
 Pourz godes grace is vertv
 Wip is swerd out a slinte
 Twei toskes at pe ferste dent;
 A spanne of pe groin be-forn
 Wip is swerd he hap of schoren.
 Po pe bor so loude cride,

Out of þe forest wide and side,
 To þe castel þar þat lai Ermin,
 Men herde þe hoise of þe swin;
 And, also he made þat lopeli cri,
 His swerd Beues hasteli
 In at þe moup gan reste þo
 And karf his hertte euene ato:
 Þe swerd a breide azen fot hot
 And þe bor is heued of smot,
 And on a tronsoun of is spere
 Þat heued a stikede for to bere.

(ll. 806-828)

In light of the animal's connections with the sins of wrath, lechery and gluttony, the way in which Beves dispatches the boar is interesting. The loss of the tusks, paralleling the loss of Beves' spear earlier in the struggle, deprives the animal of its main weapons of attack; the injury that it suffers in the groin recalls the lustful association of the sow's groin in "The Parson's Tale" and, perhaps, even the fatal groin injury inflicted on Adonis by a boar in classical legend. Finally, the fatal sword stroke through its mouth seems appropriate for an animal that is associated with the sin of gluttony. The supernatural force of the boar's "lopeli cri," heard as far away as the castle, reminds the reader of the animal's demonic character and lessens any sympathy there may be for its death.

In Sir Eglamour of Artois, the hero Sir Eglamour is told of the plight of the land of Sydon which is at the mercy of a monstrous ravaging boar.

In Sydon, þat ryche countre,
 Per dar no man abyde ne be
 For dredyng of a bare:
 Best and man, all sleys he
 That he may with ye se,
 And wondes þem wondur sore.

His tusschus passen a 3erd longe:
 pe flesch pat pey fasten amonge
 Hyt coueres neuyr more.
 (11. 349-357)

After journeying for a fortnight, Sir Eglamour enters the domain of the boar.

In a forest per he gan ryde
 As pe bore was wont to be,
 Tokenyng of hym sone he fond:
 Sleyne men on ylke a hond,
 That grymly it was to se.
 (11. 365-369)

Sleeping the night under an oak, Sir Eglamour rides further into the forest the next day, and after seeing additional indications of the animal's presence, meets the beast face to face.

Bryȝt helmes fond he strowed wyde where
 That men of armes had leued pere-
 The wykke bore had hem sleyn.
 Tyll a clyf of stone pen rydes he,
 And seys pe bore com fro pe see:
 (11. 376-380)

These helmets evoke quite a different image from the boar-helmets in Beowulf. They are pathetic reminders of man's useless, insufficient protection against this particular emissary of evil. Eglamour is in a medieval Calydon, a wasteland in which the frailty of human existence is all too apparent. The ensuing struggle has similarities to the encounter between Beves and the boar in the land of king Ermyn.

The bor saw hym per he stode,
 And whetted his tuskys as he were wode,
 And to hym come on syde.
 Sir Eglamour wendis well to do:
 With a spere he rydys hym to
 Als fast as he myȝt ryde.
 ȝyf pat he rode neuyr so faste
 Hys good spere asownder brast:

Pe hed wolde not in hym hyde.
 Pe bore com to hym with a schowe:
 Hys good stede vndur hym he slowe,
 And afote pe knyzt moste abyde.

Tyll a bownke he sette his syde
 At a full hye roche pat tyde,
 And behylde pe swyn thare.
 Hys nobyll swerde he drowȝ out syne
 And fyktes with pe wylde swyne
 Thre dayes and mare.
 Tyll on pe fowrth day abowt none
 He thowȝt hys lyfe was nere done
 For fyktyng with pe bore
 The knykte can no bettur rede:
 He stroke at pe swynes hede;
 Hys tuskes pen brake he thore.

He thankys Cryst pat ylke stounde:
 He has geue pe bore dedde wounde-
 (11. 382-407)

Like the boar in Sir Beues of Hamtoun which "rerde is brosteles wel an hiȝ" (l. 784), this boar, too, is eager to give battle, as it whets its tusks in anticipation. In both poems the actual battle follows a similar course. Sir Eglamour's spear suffers the same fate as that of Sir Beves: it breaks asunder. Unlike Sir Beves who went into the fray on foot, Sir Eglamour rides against the boar, but he soon loses his horse to the animal's tusks. Thus, like Sir Beves, Sir Eglamour is left to rely on the strength of his sword arm and a mighty struggle takes place, this one lasting three days. Things seem to be at a standstill when, miraculously, a stroke at the boar's head breaks the animal's tusks. The immediate thanks that are rendered to Christ suggest that though the prayer in this case comes after the fact, heavenly help has once again come to the aid of a Christian hero. The theme of Christian thankfulness is further emphasized by the thanks given to 'Seynt Mari' (l. 421) by

the king of Sydon when he hears of the boar's death. This boar, again like the boar of Calydon, has been under the control of another evil force, the giant Marras. The king of Sydon tells Sir Eglamour that both giant and boar have been enemies to Christians.

This wylde bore pat pou hast sleyn here
 He has be fedde his fyftene zere
 Crysten men to slo.

(11. 484-486)

Nowhere is the association of the boar with the Anti-Christ more explicit than in The Avowyng of Arthur, where the significance of the boar hunt is deeply embedded in the moral fabric of the poem. The presence of a boar near Arthur's court at Carlisle initiates the action of the poem. A huntsman, undoubtedly a warrior "bold under banere," brings news of the animal to king Arthur.

Pe King atte Carlele he lay;
 Pe hunter cummys on a day:
 Sayd, "Sir, per walkes in my way
 A well grim gryse.

He is a balefull bare;
 Secheon segh i neuyr are;
 He hase wrozte me mycull care,
 And hurte of my howundes:
 Slayn hom downe slely
 With fezting full furcely;
 Wasse per none so hardi
 Durste bide in his bandus.
 On him spild i my spere
 And mycull of my nothir gere;
 Per mone no dintus him dere,
 Ne wurche him no wowundes.
 He is masly made,
 All of fellus pat he bade,
 Per is no bulle so brade
 That in frith foundes.

He is hezer penne a horse,
 That vncumly corse;
 In faith him faylis no force
 Quen pat he shalle fezte.
 (11. 29-52)

The unnatural size and immense strength of the animal are signs of its demonic character; the boar is not an ordinary animal and the hunt that follows is not a secular one. This fact is borne out by the vow that Arthur makes after a disastrous harbouring of the animal in which kennets, bercelets and rachets all fall victim to the animal. Arthur declares to Sir Gawain, Sir Baldwin and Sir Kay:

. . . "Sirs, in your company,
Myne avow make I,
Were he neuyr so hardy,
 3one satenas to say;
To brittun him and downe bringe
Withoute any helpinge,
And I may haue my leuyng
 Hentill tomorne atte day!
 (11. 117-124)

Like Beves and Eglamour, Arthur journeys to the boar's den alone. There is no time lost in describing the ensuing contest. This boar, like its counterparts in Sir Beues of Hamtoun and Sir Eglamour of Artois, is eager to do battle.

The bore with his brode schilde,
Folūt hom fast in pe filde
And spilutte on hom gode spede.
Pen pe Kinge con crye,
And carputte of venerie;
To make his howundus hardi,
Houut on a stede,
Als sone as he come pare,
Azaynus him rebowndet pe bare:
He se neuyr no syȝte are
So sore gerutte him to drede.
(11. 166-176)

The boar's lethal attack against the hounds and then its lunge towards Arthur establish its particular aggressiveness. At this point, however, Arthur, "houut on stede" and urging his hounds on with cries of venery, is in control. In the next stanza, the poet makes it plain that the essential struggle is against the forces of

destruction as he describes the creature and its den in stark, chilling terms.

He hade drede and doute
 Of him pat was sturun and stowte;
 He began to romy and rowte,
 And gapes and gones.
 Men myzte nozte his cowch kenne
 For howundes and slayn men
 Pat he hade draun to his denne.
 And brittunt all to bones.
 Penne his tussches con he quette,
 Opon pe Kinge for to sette;
 He liftis vppe, withouten lette,
 Stokkes and stonis.
 With wrathe he begynnus to wrote.
 He ruskes vppe mony a rote
 With tussches of iii fote,
 So grisly he gronus!

(11. 177-192)

Once again a formidable adversary is presented to a Christian hero. Reminded of the boar's past victims by the stark evidence of their bones and threatened by the creature's actions with its tusks, Arthur enters into an encounter that taxes him to the limit. Like Eglamour, Arthur takes his horse into the fray but soon loses any advantage that being on horseback might give him as the animal is "Stonet starke ded" (l. 205); also, like those of Beves and Eglamour, Arthur's spear proves to be useless as it breaks into splinters against the boar's thick hide (l. 198). At this point Arthur begins to pray for heavenly succour.

To Thesu abone he bedede,
 Fro wothes hym weylde.

Penne pe King in his sadul sete
 And wiztely wan on his fete;
 He prays to Sayn Margarete⁶³
 Fro wathes him ware:
 Did as a duzty knyghte:
 Brayd oute a brand bryghte
 And heue his schild opon hiȝte,

For spild was his spere.
 Sethun he buskette him zare,
 Squithe, withoutun any mare,
 Azaynus pe fynde for to fare
 That hedoes was of hiere.
 So pay cowunturt in pe fild,
 For all pe weppuns pat he myzte weld,
 Pe bore brittunt his schild
 On brest he conne bere.

Pere downe knelus he
 And prayus till Him pat was so fre,
 "Send me pe victore!
 Pis satanas me sekis."
 (11. 207-228)

Not one but three prayers are offered in this encounter as Arthur, divested of any advantage that horse and spear might give, relies on his "brand bryzte." The boar is depicted in increasing detail that suggests, ever more strongly, that Arthur is facing a fiend from hell. Using the word "fynde" the poet then describes the hideous hair of the animal. After Arthur's prayer for victory the beast is described in undeniably demonic terms.

All wroth wex pat sqwyne,
 Blu and brayd vppe his bryne;
 As kylne oper kechine,
 Pus rudely he rekes.⁶⁴
 Pe Kynge myzte him nozte see,
 Butte lenyt him doune bi a tree,
 So nyze discumford was hee
 For smelle oper smekis.
 (11. 229-236)

Coming right after the vignette of a kneeling, praying Christian monarch, these lines are an effective use of juxtaposition. The battle lines are drawn clearly between the almost-defeated Christian hero and the foul-reeking fiend. As in Sir Beues of Hamtoun, the hero immediately gains the upper hand at a time when all seems lost; the efficacy of prayer is confirmed. As soon as the

encounter resumes, Arthur deals the boar a stroke that stuns the creature and he gains the "maistry" (l. 240). A swift stroke, again through the throat, dispatches the creature and the struggle between the forces of good and evil is ended. Unlike the encounters in Sir Beues of Hamtoun and Sir Eglamour of Artois, further approbation is given the hero as he is shown practising the art of venery, and then, as a good Christian, rendering thanks for the victory over a satanic foe.

Pe King couthe of venery,
 Colurt him full kyndely:
 Pe hed of pat hardy
 He sette on a stake.
 Sethun brittuns he pe best
 As venesun in forest;
 Bothe pe zonge and lees
 He hongus on a noke.
 Pere downe knelys hee
 Pat loues her pat is free:
 Says, "Pis socur pou hase send me
 For pi Sune sake!"
 (11. 256-268)

Though mention is made in both Sir Beues of Hamtoun (11. 826-828) and Sir Eglamour of Artois (11. 541-542) of the hero bearing the boar's head on a spear, there is no account of their proficiency at the art of venery, or of their giving thanks to heaven for their victories. The above lines, which round out the account of Arthur's struggle against the boar-fiend, emphasize that the victory has been achieved by one who though nobly capable in earthly skills is also cognisant of his human limitations.

In all three romances the hero goes against the boar fully equipped but the loss of his horse and, in particular, his spear places him in extreme peril. Consequently, he relies not only on

the strength of his sword but also on the efficacy of prayer, These encounters are quests rather than hunts; there are certain characteristics that set them apart from the normal hunt. The word "hunt" carries with it a meaning of pursuit. There is no pursuit in any of these episodes. The ever-present bones of earlier adversaries at the animals' lairs clearly announce that these creatures do not retreat. There is no unharbouring of the animal; the heroes, having journeyed to the den of the animal, go no further as they face the creature alone. Rather than being on the defensive the boars appear to relish the idea of battle. In all three accounts the animals prepare themselves briskly for the coming fray by whetting their tusks. These are not everyday boars that have been unharboured, by chance, in the broad sweep of the hunting net. In each case their presence is well known, and they are particular creatures that become the object of quests. They are, perhaps, even more extraordinary than the great Twrch Trwyth, which, great boar though it was, fled before Arthur's onslaught

Another indication of the quest is the deliberate exclusion of others as the hero ventures forth alone seeking a particular animal. In The Avowing of Arthur, an ordinary hunt turns into a quest. At first, the huntsman reports the boar's presence and a hunting party sets forth. The initial part of a hunt takes place in the harbouring of the animal. The hounds rush to the attack, but the beast will not be unharboured. At this point the chase is elevated into a quest as Arthur makes a solemn vow to do the seemingly impossible by bringing down the foe alone.

On occasion, the boar hunt can serve, like the deer hunt, to guide a hero into the realm of adventure, though this is the exception rather than the rule; the usual guide animal in Middle English romance is the deer. In the romance of Partenope of Blois not one but two boars serve as guide animals. In the first hunt the eighteen year old Partenope acquits himself with distinction. He accompanies his uncle, King Clovis, whose purpose we are told is

To [t]hys foreste for to ryde,
 Wyth knyght and squyer hym be-syde,
 And also wyth nowmber of men,
 The bore to chasse owte of hys den.⁶⁵
 (11. 526-529)

This is a boar hunt and not a quest. There is no lonely encounter with a fiend of hell; the lines describing the hunt resound with camaraderie and excitement, much in the manner of the deer hunt.

The hornes sownen as any belle,
 The howndes arne vncowpeled than.
 There loketh vp full mony a man
 Here tryste on every syde to kepe,
 Hyt ys no tyme for hem to slepe.
 And nexte the kynge of any man
 Stonde Partenope, hys tryste man.
 Ryghte sone after, wyth-owten more,
 Fownde ys the wylde boore.
 The howntes to blowe spare notte then.
 The grette lymowres ere lette renne,
 A-bowte the wodde the boore ys broghte;
 Alle the day they spare noghte
 Hym to hvnte thorowe thyke and thynne,
 Tylle the boore fulle wery of renne,
 A-yen Euyn the bay a-bodde.
 Partenope, there as he stode,
 Pullud owte hys swyrde lyche a manne,
 And ffreshely to thys bore he ranne.
 Be-twyn was then a grette stryfe,
 Butte yet the boore there loste hys lyfe.
 (11. 533-553)

This boar hunt lasts all day not because there is a stand-off between two equally matched opponents, but because the boar flees

as a hunted animal and evades its pursuers as long as possible. Unlike its demonic counterparts in The Avowing of Arthur, Sir Beues of Hamtoun or Sir Eglamour of Artois, this boar, though fierce and wild, behaves less sanguinely. It is a natural animal of the forest, unharboured and fleeing for its life. The hunt also seems to be a rite of passage into manhood by Partonope. Having witnessed the ease with which the eighteen-year-old has conquered the animal, King Clovis remarks:

. . . "Be Goddys rode,
Thys was welle don, as of a chylde,
To sle a boore so fers and wylde.
Nowe Gode, I thanke the as I can.
He ys ryghte lyke to ben a man."
(ll. 555-559)

No sooner has the first boar been killed than a second boar appears on the scene. Though it rekindles excitement in the hounds, King Clovis does not start another hunt. He gives Partonope the task of calling the hounds off the animal. It is, however, a task easier said than done. In following this boar Partonope becomes lost. All through the night the other hunters try to make contact with him by blowing on their horns, but their efforts are in vain. Leaving Partonope's predicament for a while, the author of the romance devotes a few lines to the boar which has shaken off the hounds.

Thys grette boore of home I tolde,
Thorowe the foreste ys bente full bolde,
Tylle he come to the see-syde.
There tho³te he longe not to a-byde;
Hys lyppe vn-to the see he nomme,
And ffaste thorowe the see he swomme,
And ouer see faste hym hyede,
Tylle he come in-to the other Syde.

Whan he was the perelle paste,
 He hydd hym so wonder faste
 To the wyldernes, I dar well Saye,
 And lyued there many a longe daye.
 (ll. 636-647)

There is comic relief in these lines describing the haste with which the animal flees over the sea to safety, and hopefully, a long life. The image of the creature swimming out to sea, recalls the boar Twrch Trwyth in "Culhwch and Olwen" which escapes Arthur by swimming away from Cornwall. In both cases sympathy for the animal is gained by showing it driven from land into the ocean.

Partenope of Blois has a German version, translated by Konrad von Wurzburg, which draws from A.T. Hatto the comment that to use boars as guide animals is an abuse of the theme of the boar hunt. Hatto points out, quite correctly, that the appropriate guide into a realm of adventure is the deer hunt. Hatto claims it "is a sad lapse of literary taste on the part of Konrad's source, which he follows blindly, the Partonopeus of Blois of Denis Pyramus."⁶⁶ The use of a boar hunt to lure a hero to a mistress is not unique to Partenope of Blois. In classical mythology Circe causes Picus to pursue a boar, and in the lai of Guingamour a white boar leads the hero to a fairy mistress.

Although Hatto comments on the first compound boar hunt in which two boars are instrumental in leading the hero into the land of fairy, he does not mention the second boar-hunting incident which takes place just after Partenope has met Melior, the fairy mistress. Between the first and second hunting episode Melior informs Partenope of the extent of her witchcraft. Having fallen in love with him, she explains how she used the hunt as a lure.

. . . to þe fforeste
 Off Arderne þe kynges shope hym to come
 To chase þe boore, as he was wonne.
 All this dyd I porowe my crafte,
 Tylle I hadde yowe frome hym rafte.
 The boore I made so faste to ffile,
 For I wiste welle, my loue, þat ye
 Wyth cruelle herte ye wolde hym chase.
 And so ye dyd, tylle ye ne wiste
 Where þat ye were in þat fforeste.
 This borre all day chased ye,
 Tylle nyghte ffylle on, ye myghte not se.
 (ll. 1656-1668)

Given her control over Partenope's second boar hunt, one better understands the animal's haste as it is "made so faste to ffile." The third hunt is a result of Partenope's choice to take part in a chase. This hunt appears to be under Melior's control too. This boar does not escape "wonder faste/ To the wyldernes," but is brought down by the hounds.

Styll he standythe, and bydythe the
 baye.
 There-to come anone fulle Rownde
 Alle the racches, and down to grounde
 They have hym drawe wyth grete stryffe,
 And thus the bore [hath] loste hys
 lyffe.
 (ll. 2270-2274)

It is only after the hounds have killed the animal that Partenope "hys swerde anone drawyth owte . . ." (l. 2276). Though he dispatches the first boar, thus drawing due praise from Clovis," the second and third boars offer less than the usual resistance. Boars, which in the normal world are dangerous creatures of fierce courage and independence, become less so in the land of fairy.

Alongside explicit associations of boars with demonic forces and fairy witchcraft, there exists in other Middle English romances connections between the animal and evil which are more implicit and

subtle. In several works, the appearance of the animal presages, often through a human intermediary, the occurrence of some form of deceit. In these works the animal is not so much the direct perpetrator of misfortune as it is the instrument by means of which misfortune comes and treachery is accomplished.

In one of the stories of The Seven Sages of Rome, the animal itself is not the perpetrator but victim of misfortune and deceit. In the story, a swineherd is accidentally treed by a boar. The animal has not come to attack the man, but to feed on the acorns which the swineherd has caused to fall. Though the animal is called a "wondur vylous beste" (l. 654), it is no satanic boar. The swineherd, wondering how he can get out of this predicament, hits upon a plan. Climbing down the tree, he reaches out and scratches the animal's back. He does this so expertly that the animal is lulled to sleep; whereupon he stabs the animal to death. The story is one of a series that is told to the king in an attempt to dissuade him from putting his own son to death. The theme of all the stories is deception. This particular story is told by the king's wife, who explains to him:

Thyselpe ys the olde boor,
 And clerkys clawe the here and pore
 And but pou wylt py sone sloo,
 And let hym to dethe goo.
 I beseche god, no bettur betyde,
 Than dud of the boor undur the tree.⁶⁷
 (ll. 675-680)

In the disastrous boar hunt in The Romance of Partenay, which has been cited earlier in this chapter, the topic of treachery occupies the Earl Amery's thoughts. During a lull in the hunt the

Earl, who is an accomplished astrologer, is perturbed by what he sees in the stars. He senses that a strange adventure will befall him that will be "ful sharpe and hard." (1. 191) He tells Raymond, his cousin's son,

Without any doubte know thys of trouth pure,
And no-thing no doubte, but be certayn,
If a man gan sle hys lord souerayn,

As in thys hour, he shuld gretter lorde;
More pusant, ful myghtly, and ryght gret
Than any of hys kynred in contre;

. . . .

(11. 208-213)

Without answering, the loyal Raymond alights from his horse to start a fire. The earl also dismounts and while the question of treachery occupies their minds, a huge boar appears on the scene. It is the animal which is to provide the strange adventure. In the ensuing encounter the earl, as we have seen earlier, is killed. The bereft Raymond journeys on in a distraught state and meets the enchantress Melusine who knows about the earl's death. The earl's premonition of danger and the appearance of the boar are so juxtaposed that both events are undeniably connected. The entrance of Melusine a little while later confirms the boar's role as an instrument in the operation of supernatural treachery.

In Guy of Warwick, there are two boar hunts both of which lead to ambush and misfortune. One day, while Guy is in Lorraine, a hunt unharbours a boar which has killed more than a hundred hounds. The pursuit is so long and tiresome that all the hunters and hounds turn back except for Guy and three bloodhounds; they follow the animal into Brittany. Here Guy, now alone, kills the creature

and in victory blows on his horn the prize, a special hunting call that announces the kill. At this juncture it seems that here is a boar hunt that will be completed without any untoward incident, but this is not to be. The hunting call is heard by the local earl, Florentin, who sends his son to investigate. Guy clearly has breached the laws of the forest by hunting in the earl's lands without permission. Florentin's son reproaches Guy and demands his horse; Guy refuses, but is willing to give his horn if the young man "wip loue it wille crave." (l. 6798)⁶⁸ This offer is refused and the upshot is that Guy kills the earl's son; it is an action that leads to further trouble with the earl and his men.

The second boar hunt in Guy of Warwick is similar to some other boar hunts in Middle English literature which are linked to ambushes. The emperor of Germany, while laying seige to Duke Segyn, decides to go hunting. A spy informs the Duke who lays an ambush which is successful. The animal unsloughed is a boar, and appropriately it is a boar-hunt that leads the emperor into the ambush. In this instance, the victim of the ambush is not harmed, but such is not the case in other boar hunts associated with ambushes. Often the boar hunt leads the hunter into a fatal ambush. For instance, in Layamon's Brut, the wicked king Gracien is ambushed by the brothers Aelfwald and Ethelbald while he is boar hunting. The incident is not found in the Anglo-Norman Wace but is part of Layamon's "anglicization" of the work. In Sir Beues of Hamtoun another boar hunt-ambush incident occurs that also appears to be something of an anglicization. At the beginning of the

romance, Sir Guy, Sir Beues' father, is lured, as we have seen earlier, into the forest by the ruse of his young wife who feigns sickness and, like Richard in Richard Coer de Lion, she longs for the flesh of a wild boar. The author, however, leaves one in no doubt as to the true reason for the hunt.

'Madame,' . . . 'for loue myn,
Whar mai ich finde pat wilde swin?
I wolde, pow it hadde!'
And zhe answerde wip tresoun mest,
Be pe se in hare forest,
Par a bradde.

Pat erl swor, be godes grace,
In pat forest he wolde chace,
Pat bor to take;
And zhe answerde wip tresoun pan:
'Blessed be pow of alle man
For mine sake!'

(ll. 187-198)

Heinrich Beck thinks that the original version of the story in which it is a stag hunt that is undertaken came from Picardy. He maintains that the change of the animal to a boar is due to Germanic influences,⁶⁹ supporting his argument by referring to Marjodoc's dream in Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Siegfried's death in the Nibelungenlied. Marjodoc dreams that a boar is fouling the king's bed; the boar is Isolde's lover, Tristan. Siegfried is stabbed in the back as he is drinking in a stream while on a boar hunt. It may be that Germanic influences account for not only the change of animal in Sir Beues of Hamtoun, but also Layamon's addition of Gracien's fatal boar-hunt in the Brut.

A form of deceit also operates in Richard's longing for pork in Richard Coer de Lion. Unable to procure pork in an area of the world where the animal's flesh was considered unclean, Richard's

attendants substitute the flesh of a Saracen.

The sothe to saye, at wurdes fewe,
 Slayn and soden was the hethene schrewe.
 Beffore the kyng it was forth brought.
 Quod hys men: "Lord, we have pork sought;
 Etes, and soupes off the browys swote,
 Thorwgh grace off God it schal be your boote."
 Beffore Kyng Richard karff a knyght;
 He eete faster than he karve myght.
 The kyng eet the flesh and gnew the bones,
 And drank wel afftyr, for the nones.
 And whenne he hadde eeten inowgh,
 Hys folk hem turnyd away and lowgh.
 He lay styлле, and drowgh in hys arme;
 Hys chamberlayn hym wrappyd warm.
 He lay and slepte, and swete a stound,
 And become hool and sound.
 Kyng Richard cladde hym and aros,
 And walkyd abouten in the clos;
 To alle folk he hym schewyd,
 Glad was bothe lerd and lewyd:
 And thanked Jesu and Marye,
 That he was out off hys maladye.

(11. 3081-3102)

The ruse, accompanied by the secret laughter of the courtiers and the psychosomatic implications of the episode, serves to undercut the character of Richard, a man who may not be refused anything without dire consequence to the refuser who may "be hongyd" (1. 3050).

Human treachery attends a boar hunt a second time in Sir Beues of Hamtoun, when after overcoming the boar the Christian Sir Beues is set upon by a jealous steward and ten foresters. His predicament is great.

A wolde drawe to is swerde:
 Panne hadde he leued it por,
 Par he hadde slawe pe bor.
 He nadde noping him self to were,
 Boute a tronsoun of a spere.
 Po was Beues sore desmeid,
 Pe heued fro pe tronsoun a braid,

And wippe bor is heued a fauzt,
 And wan a swerd of miche mauzt,
 Pat Morgelai was cleped aplizt:
 Beter swerd bar neuer knizt.
 (11. 852-862)

The exigencies of hunt having deprived Beves even of nominal weaponry, he, recently victorious over a fiend, is not to be brought down by an envious human. Using the boar's head not so much as defensive magic but as a weapon of defence, Beves gains a sword and soon kills the steward and the ten foresters. Once again the Christian hero emerges unscathed after battling great odds.

Another well-known incident of a boar hunt that causes misfortune to an individual occurs in Malory's tale of "Launcelot and Elaine." Lancelot, having been driven mad by Elaine's deception and Guinevere's consequent rejection of him, roams the woods, where he is found and cared for by the brothers, Sir Blyaunte and Sir Selyvaunte. One day Lancelot comes across a boar hunt and joins in the fray.

. . . than sir Launcelot ran at the boore wyth hys speare and all to-shyvird his speare. And therewyth the boore turned hym lyghtly, and rove oute the longys and the harte of the horse, that sir Launcelot felle to the erthe; and, or ever he myght gete frome hys horse, the bore smote hym on the brawne of the thyghe up unto the howghe-boone. And than sir Launcelot was wrothe, and up he gate uppon hys feete, and toke hys swerde and smote of the borys hede at one stroke.⁷⁰

The detailed description of the injuries inflicted by the boar upon man and horse is unique in Middle English literature. The stark clauses, "rove oute the longys and the harte of the horse" and "smote hym Sir Lancelot on the brawne of the thyghe up unto the howghe-boone," bring to mind the warnings about the boar hunt by authors of

hunting manuals and also show the great bodily peril that Sir Lancelot faces. The physical perils of the boar hunt in this case are contrasted purposefully with the even greater danger of madness that afflicts the hero. The mad, and now gravely injured, Sir Lancelot is aided by a hermit who cures him of his physical injuries but is unable to cure him of his madness. Escaping once again into the forest, Lancelot accidentally makes his way back to Elaine. Eventually he is miraculously cured by the healing influence of the Holy Grail. Embedded in the middle of Lancelot's adventures as a madman, the boar hunt is used to contrast physical and spiritual illness. The physical afflictions, described in stark detail, can be healed by man, but Lancelot's more serious illness of madness needs the efficacy of the Holy Grail.

Though in "Launcelot and Elaine" and the specifically demonic boar hunts the power of Christianity reigns supreme and supplants the pre-Christian tradition of the all-mighty protective force of the animal, there is an area in which the latter tradition mingles amicably with medieval Christianity. One of the familiar customs of the medieval English Christmas was the carrying into the festive hall of a boar's head on a platter. As the ceremony was done the "Boar's Head Carol" was sung by everyone present. There are many versions of this carol, but perhaps the best known is the version sung traditionally during the procession of the boar's head, still observed at Queen's College, Oxford.

Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.

The boar's head in hand bear I
 Bedeck'd with bays and rosemary.
 And I pray you, masters, be merry,
 Quot estis in convivio.

The Boar's head as I understand,
 Is the bravest dish in all the land,
 When thus bedeck'd with a gay garland.
 Let us servire cantico.

Out steward hath provided this,
 In honour of the King of Bliss,
 Which on this day to be served is,
 In Reginensi Atrio.⁷¹

The procession and carol can be seen as part of what Jean Seznec calls a "tendency of the Middle Ages to establish parallels between pagan wisdom and the wisdom of the Bible."⁷² The admiration of the pre-Christian peoples for the boar found expression, according to John Speirs, in a mid-winter's boar-feast and ale-feast

. . . in which the strength of the boar and the
 life of the ale entered into the company that
 partook them and bound it together.⁷³

This celebration was apparently christianized and given a new significance as it was incorporated into the feast that celebrated the birth of the new god, Christ. Speirs thinks that the carol was probably sung as the head was carried ceremoniously into the hall "decked like a God -- having been indeed originally a divinity for the sacred feast." Further christianization is attempted in one version of the carol in which the boar's head is said to symbolize Christ.

The borys hede that we bryng here
 Betokneth a Prince withoute pere
 Ys born this day to bye vs dere.⁷⁴

This equation of the boar with a prince, in this case the Prince of Princes -- Christ-- is an extension, perhaps, of the earlier

Celtic and Germanic traditions that saw particularly strong rulers or princes of England as boars; these titles in turn were yet another manifestation of the defensive magic that the animal was thought to exercise.

This attempt to christianize the boar feast is evidence of the widespread influence that the animal enjoyed in Europe. Its courage and ferocity in battle made an indelible impression on the European mind. In hunting manuals, the dangers posed to horse, hound and human are graphically described. These perils of the boar hunt are echoed in Middle English romance as hounds, horses and heroes fall prey to the animal's most dangerous offensive weapons, its tusks. In many a romance, special attention is focussed on the tusks which are extended to hyperbolic proportions as the medieval imagination takes flight.

Imagination also played a role in the cultures of pre-Christian Europeans, who allowed the animal important places in their various cosmologies. In the Mediterranean regions, the animal's ferocity caused it to be linked with gods that were vengeful or evil. Further north, the Celtic and Germanic peoples also placed the animal in close proximity to, or among, their gods. In these northern cultures, the boar's natural courage drew admiration and sympathy, and the animal often became a symbol of defensive magic. Such a symbol makes its appearance in the boar helmets mentioned in Beowulf, and in the title of "aper anglicus" given to strong British rulers, well able to protect the country, in early chronicle material. In some Middle English works, sympathy for

endangered heroes is elicited by boar similes in which aggression, at times quite reckless, is seen to be the best form of defence. Another aspect of defensive magic associated with the animal is found in early English medicinal lore, in which the boar's flesh is said to have curative powers. This folklore finds its way into some Middle English romances; however, in these works deception also plays a role so that nowhere in Middle English romance does the flesh of a boar do anyone any good.

Though boar similes eliciting sympathy for human combatants are sprinkled through the pages of Middle English romance, the dominant attitude towards the animal in these works is one of fear and loathing as the animal becomes associated with disorder and Satan or Anti-Christ. Such an association had backing from scripture and bestiary material. Biblical and bestiary references, along with natural observation of marauding swine and the frequent decimation of hunting packs and hunters by boars, caused the animal to become a symbol of the sins of wrath, gluttony and lechery. Medieval writers use these associations when characterizing individuals or commenting on segments of society. Only rarely, as in Partonope of Blois and William of Palerne,⁷⁵ do boars act as guide animals, a role that is usually reserved for deer.

In several romances, the animal's connections with danger allow boar hunts, or appearance of boars, to herald misfortunes in which treachery, deception and unchivalrous behaviour play significant roles. Sometimes the realistic dangers of the boar hunt are used

as a cover to effect an ambush and kill an enemy. In Malory's tale of "Launcelot and Elaine" the physical dangers of the boar hunt are used as a contrast to the great mental affliction of madness.

In Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde and in "The Boar's Head Carol," earlier, more beneficent traditions concerning the animal live on. In Cassandra's interpretation of Troilus' dream, the animal is associated with its heraldic symbolism of bravery and in "The Boar's Head Carol" the defensive magic of the Germanic boar and the saving grace of Christ intermingle in a celebration in which Christianity accommodates traditions of earlier ages.

Such Christian accommodation is, however, of limited extent. In opposition to the deer's symbolic associations with order and Christ, the boar in medieval cosmology, and consequently in Middle English literature, is strongly associated with disorder and the architect of disorder, the Anti-Christ. Well organized par force deer hunts are used by medieval authors to lead heroes to areas of disorder, whereas ravaging boars are themselves the cause of disorder and so provide quests for Christian heroes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE THREE HUNTS IN SIR

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Unquestionably, the best known hunts in the corpus of Middle English literature are the deer, boar and fox hunts in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Embedded in the centre of this carefully structured poem, these hunts have drawn relatively little critical attention in the wealth of scholarly articles and books that have been devoted to the work.

The most sustained investigation of these hunts has been undertaken by Henry L. Savage who wonders why the author has recounted the lord's hunting exploits in such detail. Savage points out that the wealth of description concerning the hunts extends to some 280 lines of the work which in turn are juxtaposed with 370 lines devoted to the interviews between Gawain and the lady. Savage states that while the vivid descriptions are one of the poet's characteristics, he seldom digresses merely for the sake of description; neither does he pad a narrative with details extraneous to the main theme.¹ Savage maintains that the order of these hunts is not a matter of chance but of design. Particularly since they take place in a work

. . . where so much depends upon the nice adjustment of part to part, upon the fusion of separate incidents into unity, and upon the dovetailing of elements that are diverse where they are not actually discordant, one is inclined to see purpose rather than accident.² For art is the creation not of chance, but of design.

The main thrust of Savage's argument lies in what he sees to be a close correspondence between the characteristic behaviour of the animals hunted and the behaviour of Gawain in the bedroom scenes at the castle. As the animals seek to evade the lord of the castle in

the fields, so Gawain resists the amorous advances of the lord's wife in the hunt of love that is staged within the castle. On the first day, the hunt has as its quarry timid does and hinds. Juxtaposed with these scenes of deer hunting is the scene in Gawain's bedroom at the castle, in which his behaviour parallels, to a certain extent, the characteristic behaviour of deer. When he hears the soft entrance of the lady into the chamber, he lies still in bed feigning sleep, just as a deer lies low in covert.³

Hit watz pe ladi, loflyest to beholde,
 Pat droȝ pe dor after hir ful dernly and styлле,
 And boȝed towarde pe bed; and pe burne schamed,
 And layde hym doun lystyly, and let as he slepte;
 And ho stepped stilly and stel to his bedde,
 Kest vp pe cortyn and creped withinne,
 And set hir full softly on pe bed-syde,
 And lenged pere selly longe to loke quen he wakened.
 Pe lede lay lurked a ful longe quyle,
 Compast in his concience to quat pat cace myȝt
 Meue oper amount - to meruayle hym poȝt,
 Bot ȝet he sayde in hymself, 'More semly hit were
 To aspye wyth my spelle in space quat ho wolde.'
 Pen he wakenede, and wroth, and to hir warde torned,
 And vnlouked his yȝe-lyddez, and let as hym wondered,
 And sayned hym, as bi his saȝe pe sauer to worthe,
 with hande.
 (11. 1187-1203)⁴

Like many a hunted deer, Gawain is forced to break cover by the continued presence of the hunter, in this case the lady. Louis Blenkner finds Gawain's behaviour on this occasion to be particularly foxy because he does not panic but lies still until eventually he "cunningly pretends to awake."⁵ Indeed, cunning is exhibited here, but cunning is not the sole preserve of the fox. As we have seen, deer exhibited a considerable degree of cunning during a hunt. Lying low in covert was one of several ruses that included doubling back on the trail and taking to water.

On the second day, the lord of the castle hunts up a boar. Savage, in commenting on Gawain's behaviour in the parallel bedroom scene, notes that his conduct is different from that of the previous day. His resolution and directness remind one of the hunted boar. His failure to pretend sleep, to feign surprise, or make the sign of the cross⁶ differs from the previous day as he meets the lady "face to the front" in much the same manner as the boar meets her husband later that same day.⁷

On the third day, a fox becomes the object of the hunt. Savage points out, quite correctly, that this animal was not 'noble game' in medieval times, but was known to be a cunning, 'false' beast. In the parallel scene in the bedchamber, Gawain, by accepting the Green Girdle from the lady and failing to hand it over to the lord that night as part of the exchange-of-winnings bargain, commits a false act. Gawain's actions and those of the fox allow, Savage postulates

. . . an even closer degree of correspondence.
 . . . In the endeavour to avoid the danger from the lord's blade, Reynard "shunts," and attempts to reverse direction, but his very shift carries him into the jaws of his enemies.

The correspondence between the case of Reynard and that of Sir Gawain is very close. In the endeavour to avoid the fate which threatens him, the fox resorts to a bit of trickery, and that bit of trickery is his undoing. The position of Gawain is the same: in his desire to avoid death from the impending blow, he resorts to trickery, and his recourse to duplicity proves the sole and only cause of his disgrace. Thus the two situations closely resemble each other.⁸

John Speirs, in Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition, also sees the hunts as symbolic parallels to the scenes in the castle. He submits that the timidity of the deer, the ferocity of the boar and the cunning of the fox are "the qualities of the natural man which Courtesy has to vanquish or, at least, civilize."⁹ In The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study, A.C. Spearing asserts that the general parallel between the two sets of encounters is of greater importance than any detailed correspondence. He states: "A hunt is going on in the castle as it is in the forest and in both cases it is a hunt to the death."¹⁰ Though all the critics have paid varying degrees of attention to the hunts, insufficient attention has been paid to the actual forms of the hunts undertaken, or any comparisons made to other hunting scenes in Middle English literature. Equally, though the realism of the hunting scenes has drawn favourable critical comment, further examination of these scenes will reveal more about the role that hunting plays in the poem.

Sacvan Bercovitch maintains that the realism of the hunts helps to establish a 'counter-romance effect' in the poem. Stating that the deer, the boar and the fox, besides having emblematic significance, are real animals, Bercovitch points out that the hunts

. . . form an accurate picture of actual practice,
 Nature may produce satyrs, serpents, and
 giants, but here it reveals itself to be primarily
 the home of the wild game that provides civilized
 man with pleasant sport and with "dayntes" (1401)
 for his festivities.¹¹

The length of the hunts is also realistic and functions well with the poet's deeper concerns in the work. As we have seen earlier, a medieval hunt often did last all day;¹² consequently, the removal of the lord from the castle during the day is rendered quite plausible.

Another aspect of realism that has not escaped critical attention is the poet's use of the medieval hunt's intricate terminology. Accepting common authorship of the poems found in the same manuscript as Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Cotton Nero A, Savage says of the author that hunting "was a pastime much in his thought." (The Gawain Poet. p. 22) Spearing likewise concludes that the poet was a

. . . 'jantyllman' writing for 'jantylmen,'
certainly in being learned in the lore and
language of hunting, he is fully identified
with the aristocratic society for which he
wrote.¹³

If the hunting scenes are realistic, then this realism contrasts with the unnaturalness of the bedroom encounters that they parallel. It has been recognised that Sir Bercilak takes part in an exhilarating, natural activity in the hunt, fulfilling a proper social function as he helps to provide food for the larder and thereby aiding in culling any excess of game. In contrast to such natural activity, the lady is unnatural as she hunts the male and the bedroom scenes indoors are made all the more unnatural by comparison.¹⁴ The lady's unnatural actions are matched by the equally unusual state of physical inaction into which Gawain is forced. Lying abed, Gawain is open to the temptations engendered by Sloth. The English Dominican,

John Bromyard was forthright in connecting the sins of lust and sloth. Describing "the Devil's Castle," Bromyard asserts that lust holds great hospitality in the castle and that Sloth is its chamberlain, "who draws the curtains and makes men lie for long in wantonness, and makes priests to celebrate after midday, fearing more to give offence to their lords than to God."¹⁵ Avoidance of the sin of sloth was, as we have seen, a counter-argument for hunting presented by proponents of the sport against criticism from religious quarters. The argument, found as early as Ovid, was stated clearly in the hunting manuals of medieval Europe. The chase saved hunters from a multitude of sins by keeping them from lying in bed too long. Edward, Second Duke of York's statement about the perfect and skillful hunter is of particular relevance when discussing Gawain's situation at the castle.

Now shall I prove how a hunter may not fall into any of the seven deadly sins. When a man is idle and reckless without work, and be not occupied in doing something, he abides in his bed or in his chamber, a thing which draweth men to imaginations of fleshly lust and pleasure. For such men have no wish but to abide in one place and think in pride, or in avarice, or in wrath, or in sloth, or in gluttony, or in lechery, or in envy. For the imagination of men rather turns to evil than to good¹⁶

Gawain's lying in bed is not a voluntary act; it is part of the conditions imposed upon him by the lord of the castle. As the guests are leaving the castle after the joyous Christmas festivities, Gawain reveals the purpose of his journey. On hearing that his host knows the whereabouts of the Green Chapel, which is said to be 'not two myle henne' (l. 1078), Gawain, in a moment of joyful relief,

and in keeping with his reputation for courtesy,¹⁷ says: 'Now I
 ponk yow pryuandely pur3 alle oper pynge,/ Now acheued is my chaunce,
 I schal at your wylle/ Dowelle, and ellez do quat 3e demen.'
 (11. 1080-1082). The host, seizing upon this courteous speech, asks
 Gawain if he really means what he says. Gawain reaffirms his
 intentions of being a perfect guest by saying, 'Whyl I byde in yowre
 bor3e, be bayn to 3owre hest' (l. 1092). Gawain's courteous behaviour
 at this point is in accord with the medieval principle of manners in
 which the guest obeys the host. Kittredge remarks that

. . . Gawain must do as his host bids, or he is
 lost. He does not know the importance of such
 obedience, but . . . his courtesy prompts him to
 yield in all things to his entertainer, on the
 medieval principle that a man is master in his own
 house and that his guests owe him unquestioning
 complaisance [sic].¹⁸

The lord of the castle's response to Gawain's offer appears at first
 sight to be motivated by concern for Gawain's well-being.

For 3e haf travayled, '. . . towen fro ferre,
 And syphen waked me wyth, 3e arn not wel waryst
 Nauper of sostnaunce ne of slepe, soply I knowe,
 3e schal lenge in your lofte, and ly3e in your ese
 To-morn quyle pe messequyle, and to mete wende
 When 3e wyl, wyth my wyf, pat wyth yow schal sitte
 And comfort yow with company, til I to cort torne;
 3e lende,
 And I schal erly ryse,
 On huntynge wyl I wende.'
 (11. 1093-1102)

This solicitude of the host is interesting. Though Gawain has
 travelled far before he arrives at the castle he has by this time
 spent the nights of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and
 St. John's Day (l. 1022) there without any apparent discomfort. If
 the festive revelling at the castle lends some credence to the host's

suggestion that Gawain is not well rested, it damages his suggestion that Gawain is not well nourished; after all, the guests at the castle have been served lavishly over the holiday season. The poet's description of the feast on Christmas Day leaves one in no doubt about this.

So did hit pere on pat day purȝ dayntés mony:
 Bope at mes and at mele messes ful quaynt
 Derf men vpon dece drest of pe best.
 (ll. 998-1000)

Also, since, by the host's own admission, the Green Chapel is only two miles away and the fact that Gawain is not going into battle so much as going to receive an undefended blow, this concern for Gawain's physical well-being seems somewhat out of proportion. The exchange-of-winnings proposal, too, raises questions. How can a man resting in a castle gain 'winnings' to exchange with a man who has been out hunting? Certainly one of the uses of the hunts is that of providing the lord of the castle with material for exchange. It is an exchange that shows, perhaps, the rewards of indolence in comparison with those of energetic activity. The exchange of winnings also echoes the carefree exchange of new-year's gifts that takes place at Camelot in the opening scene of the poem.

. . . sypen riche forth runnen to reche hondselles,
 ȝeȝed ȝeres-ȝiftes on hiȝ, ȝelde hem bi hond,
 Debated busyly aboute po giftes;
 Ladies lazed ful loude, poȝ pay lost haden,
 And he pat wan watz not wrothe, pat may ȝe wel trawe.
 (ll. 66-70)

Tolkien and Gordon point out that though it is not known how the lords and ladies contended for the gifts, probably the gift about which the ladies laughed, even though they had lost, was a kiss.¹⁹

The carefree exchange of gifts at Camelot contrasts both with the exchange of winnings between Gawain and the lord of the castle which is formalized in an agreement and with the pursuit after some form of exchange by the lady of the castle on the day of the third hunt.

Another contrast lies in the respective behaviours of host and guest at Camelot and the castle. At the castle, it is the host's wishes that are adhered to, while at Camelot it is the wishes of the unexpected guest that hold sway. The lord of the castle's insistence that Gawain remain at the castle shows, as Marcelle Thiébaux asserts,

. . . an accurate acquaintance with the vices and virtues connected with hunting, according to what²⁰ was known and believed in the fourteenth century.

Thiébaux and Larry Benson²¹ both refer to another piece of medieval literature, Chaucer's "Parson's Tale," in which one is advised that a

. . . remedie agayns Leccherie is specially to withdrawen swiche thynges as yeve occasion to thilke vileynye, as ese, etynge, and drynkynge. For certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr./ Slepynge longe in greet quiete is eek a greet norice to Leccherie./²²

After complying with his host's wishes for the first two days, Gawain does try to extricate himself from his now unenviable situation at the castle. He tries to 'withdrawe the fyr' by asking permission of the host to leave the next day (. . . *pe knyȝt craved leve to kayre on pe morn*, . . . 1. 1670). However, he is urged by the lord of the castle to stay. Once again the ideas of rest and ease are suggested as being beneficial.²³ Gawain's request to leave a day earlier than necessary must be seen as an effort to avoid another

meeting with the lady of the castle on the following day. This action would have gained the approval of Chaucer's Parson who also states that

Another remedie agayns Leccherie is that a man
or woman eschue the compaignye of hem by whiche he
douteth to be tempted; for al be it so that the dede
be withstonden yet is ther greet temptacioun.

("The Parson's Tale. 1. 953)

The deliberate exclusion of Gawain from the hunting field not only places him in a dangerous situation, but also removes him from nature and the outdoors. In a poem in which he is continually being tested within the framework of game and play, he is deliberately excluded from any tests that the hunt, the greatest game a medieval nobleman knew, could provide. His experiences during the last three days at the castle are all born of the world of artifice rather than the world of nature. By this time Gawain has already demonstrated his ability to cope with whatever a hostile nature may provide, his arrival at the castle having been achieved only after overcoming natural perils, whether they be dangerous creatures or bitter climate.

The Gawain-poet portrays the castle-forest dichotomy very carefully and dramatically as he plots Gawain's journey to the castle. Initially, Gawain traverses known territory as he rides through Logres and Wales, with the names of Anglesey and Holy Head provided to leave no doubt that Gawain, though alone, is still in the recognisable humanized world. His arrival at the Wirral (l. 701), the last geographically identifiable place on the journey, signals it seems a threshold, as Gawain enters a world where "auper God oper

gome wyth goud hert louied." (l. 702.)²⁴ In the Wirral, Gawain encounters a frighteningly hostile world in which monsters and bitter cold greet him at every turn. With Christian faith and knightly courage, he survives the transitional zone to ride

Into a forest ful dep, pat ferly watz wylde,
 Hiȝe hilleȝ on vche a halue, and holtwodeȝ vnder
 Of hore okeȝ ful hoge a hundreth togeder;
 Pe hasel and pe haȝporne were harled al samen,
 With roȝe raged mosse rayled aywhere,
 With mony brydȝeȝ vnblype vpon bare twyges
 Pat pitosly per piped for pyne of pe colde.
(ll. 741-747)

Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter note the "unusually personal note" of these lines, remarking that the Gawain-poet was perhaps the first to describe the "rough moss growing in a virgin forest, or the twisted thickets of hazel and hawthorn. . . ." ²⁵

The detailed description of the winter forest not only keeps nature at the centre of attention, but contributes to the dramatic effect of the sudden appearance of the castle. In the middle of a deep forest, which is itself surrounded by a wild countryside, the castle stands in stark contrast to its surroundings. The poet lingers in superlatives as he describes the edifice and its enclosing parks, and records Gawain's approach.

Abof a launde, on a lawe, loken vnder boȝeȝ
 Of mony borelych bole aboute bi pe dicheȝ:
 A castel pe comlokest pat euer knyȝt aȝte,
 Pyched on a prayere, a park al aboute,
 With a pyked palays pyned ful pik,
 Pat vnbeteȝe mony tre no pen two myle.
 Pat holde on pat on syde pe hapel auysed
 As hit schemered and schon purȝ pe schyre okeȝ;
 . . .
 pe bryge watz breȝe vpbrayde
 pe ȝateȝ wer stoken faȝte,
 pe walleȝ were wel arayed,
 Hit dut no wyndeȝ blaste.

Pe burne bode on blonk, pat on bonk hoved
 Of pe depe double dich pat drof to pe place;
 Pe walle wod in pe water wonderly depe,
 Ande eft a ful huge hezt hit haled vpon lofte
 Of harde hewen ston vp to pe tablez
 Enbaned vnder pe abataylment in pe best lawe;
 And syten garytez ful gaye gered bitwene,
 Wyth mony luflych loupe pat louked ful clene:
 A better barbican pat burne blusched vpon neuer
 And innermore he behelde pat halle ful hyze,
 Towres telded bytwene, trochet ful pik,
 Fayre fylyolez pat fyzed, and ferlyly long
 With corouon coprounes craftyly sleze.
 Chalkwhyte chymnees per ches he innoze
 Vpon bastel rouez, pat blenked ful quyte;
 So mony pynakle payntet watz poundred ayquere,
 Among pe castel carnelez clambred so pik,
 Pat pared out of papure purely hit semed.
 (ll. 765-772, 781-802)

The deliberate delineation of the castle's features, with focus resting now on its massive stonework, now on delicate pinnacles which appear like paper cut-outs, shifts attention from the world of nature to the world of man. Appearing immediately after Gawain has crossed himself three times, the castle standing "abof a launde" with its "chalkwhyte chymnees" and gleaming white towers reaching towards heaven seems to be a point of epiphany as the Christian Gawain finds succour within its walls.

The three hunts, described at some length, continue the contrast between the world of nature outside the castle, and the world of man inside. The strength of contrast is achieved as the bedroom and hunting scenes alternate abruptly, with the latter full of the energetic joys of the chase while the former portray scenes of ease and attempted intrigue. Just as the elaborate description of the castle shifts attention to the world of man, the hunting scenes reintroduce the world of nature. The plight of the animals, and a

sense of their inevitable death, though reminding us of Gawain's plight, focus attention on immediate danger, and provide a relief from being too much with Gawain. Also the hunting scenes with their cynegetic and landscape detail form an aesthetic balance to the castle scenes with their detail of conversation and castle life. The bushes on which "þe forst clenged" contrast with the warmth of "þe chymne in chamber," while both images serve to remind one of the winter season. Pearsall and Salter see correspondences between some of the indoor scenes and patterns in medieval Calendar art. For example, Gawain's arrival at the castle, when he is given a chair by the chimney in which a fire is burning (ll. 875-6) is seen as "a sophisticated version of February-by-the-fire." Gawain's departure from the castle also

reads curiously as if the poet were remembering some February vignette of the type found in the Queen Mary's Psalter -- the dressing of a nobleman, in a bedroom warmed against the 'wylde wederes of the worlde': --

'Deliverly he dressed up er the day sprenged,
For there was lyght of a laumpe that lemed in his chambre.
He called to his chamberlayn, that cofly him swared . . .
Fyrst he clad him in his clothes, the colde for to were . . .
(2009-11, 2015).²⁶

The hunts also remind one of the cycle of the seasons, not only through the winter landscape but also through the animal hunted. On the first hunt, the lord pursues only barren hinds because it is the closed season on the male deer, while on the second hunt the boar is chased in the right season, which according to The Master of Game was from Christmas Day to Candlemas (February 2).²⁷

The usual purpose of isolation is also served by the three hunts. The use of hunting to remove husband from wife and leave her in the company of another man occurs, as we have seen, elsewhere in Middle English literature. In both The Avowing of Arthur and Malory's "The Morte Arthur Saunz Geurdon" the main reasons why the husbands, Sir Baldwin and Arthur, are sent hunting is so that the lack of jealousy of Sir Baldwin and the faithfulness of Guinevere can be tested. In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the Gawain-poet uses the familiar purpose of the hunt in a different way. Whereas in The Avowing of Arthur and Malory the reason for the hunt is stated early in the work before the hunt takes place, in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight the truth of the situation is not revealed till the end of the poem when Gawain, along with the poem's audience, realizes that neither husband nor wife is an innocent participant in the plot. In this case, it is a test of the third party's ability to withstand sexual temptation under what to a medieval audience would be difficult physical, and consequently mental, conditions. Though everything is not revealed about the inhabitants of the castle till the end of the work, there are hints that all is not what it appears to be. These hints are to be found both in the bedroom scenes and in those that depict the three hunts; they are hints that would not escape an alert medieval audience, well versed in the lore of the hunt and also acquainted with the use of the sport in other medieval romances.

The first of the three hunts is one that ends in wholesale slaughter of does and hinds. Considering the connection that deer hunting had with the hunt of love, it is fitting that female deer

should be the quarry and parallel the first of the bedroom scenes in which the lady of the castle makes her intentions known in a very bold fashion. Though there appears to have been no Middle English equivalent to the hunts of love found in works such as Le dis dou cerf amoureux, or L'amoreuse prise, this hunt comes closest, through juxtaposition and parallel, to the explicit comparisons made in these Old French works. However, the hunt after female deer by the lord and his fellow huntsmen points to the irony in the hunt that the lady conducts in the castle where it is a female actively pursuing a male.

The extreme noise and bustle of the first hunt contrasts sharply with the quiet and stealth of the first bedroom scene.

Pe does dryven with gret dyn to pe depe sladez;
 Per myzt mon se, as pay slypte, slentyng of arwes-
 At vche wende vnder wande wapped a flone-
 Pat bigly bote on pe broun with full brode hede.
 What! pay brayen, and bleden, bi bonkez pay dezen,
 And ay rachches in a res radly hem folzes,
 Huntrez wyth hyze horne hasted hem after
 Wyth such a crakkande kry as klyfes haden brusten.
 (ll. 1158-1166)

The "gret dyn" and "crakkande kry" of the chase gives way to "a littel dyn" (l. 1183) made by the lady at the door to Gawain's bedchamber. The juxtaposition of noise with stealth helps contrast the hunting scenes with the bedroom scenes that they surround.

Both hunting law and hunting lore are observed in the deer hunt. Hunting law is respected, as mentioned earlier, as the close season of the hart and the buck is respected. The observance of forest law is stated explicitly:

Pay let pe hertez haf pe gate, with pe hyze hedes,
 Pe breme bukkez also with hor brode paumez:
 For pe fre lorde hade defende in ferysoun tyme
 Pat per schulde no mon meue to pe male dere.
 (11. 1154-1157)

It is, however, the correct season to hunt the female of the species.²⁸
 As in The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn, the hinds and
 does are not protected by the 'fermysoun tyme.'²⁹ Hunting lore is
 observed as we witness the lord's attendance at mass before the hunt
 and the ritual "breaking" of the deer or curée. The lord does not,
 it seems, fall within the dictum that "hunters ben nat hooly men."³⁰
 Like Sir Degrevant, his attendance at mass reinforces at this point
 his apparent, unsullied nobility.³¹ The curée has drawn the attention
 of critics who generally see the description of this ritual as
 deliberately realistic. Savage and Spearing, we have noted, see the
 detailed description of this affair as evidence of the poet's
 nobility. One notices, however, that the lord of the castle does not
 seem to take part in the act. The poet writes:

Pe best bozed perto with burnez innoghe,
 Gedered pe grattest of gres pat per were,
 And didden hem derely vndo as pe dede askez;
 Serched hem at pe asay summe pat per were
 Two fyngeres pay fonde of pe fowlest of alle.
 (11. 1325-1329)

In The Master of Game it is stated that the lord "should charge whom
 he list to undo the deer," (p. 176) and in Gaston Phoebus' Le livre de
 la chase³² there is an illustration of the curée in which the lord
 looks on as members of the hunt conduct the ceremony. In romance,
 however, performance of the curée is usually undertaken by a
 particular hero. Indeed, in both Sir Tristrem and The Lyfe of

Ipomydon it is, as stated in Chapter two, not so much the ability to hunt as the mastery one exhibits in performing the curée that is seen as evidence of nobility. It may be no more than a realistic detail that the lord does not perform the curée, or it may be, when one considers the other curées in romance, an attempt by the Gawain-poet to suggest that the lord of the castle is less than unequivocally noble.

The type of deer hunt undertaken is also of more than passing interest. It is not a par force hunt, but like the hunts in The Lyfe of Ipomydon and The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn it is a hunt with bows and "stables," platforms erected under trees. In this hunt, as we have noted earlier, the hunted animals move toward the hunters, with more being slain than in the par force chase in which only one animal is marked down and hunted until either death or escape resolves the issue. It is not as sporting a hunt as the par force method.

Though the male deer are allowed to go free in accordance with the closed season on them, the slaughter of the female deer is wholesale and brutal. The poet stresses that there is no escape for these luckless animals.

What wylde so atwaped wyzes pat schotten.
 Watz al toraced and rent at pe resayt,
 Bi pay were tened at pe hyze and taysed to pe wattrez;
 Pe ledez were so lerned at pe loze trysteres,
 And þ3 greyhoundez so grete, pat geten hem bylyue
 And hem tofylched, as fat as frekez myzt loke,
 Per-ryzt.

(ll. 1167-1173)

Hapless animals falling prey to hunters and hounds without a sporting chance would not have been condoned by Gaston Phoebus. It is a massacre that contrasts strongly with Phoebus' words:

. . . I should not teach to take beasts unless
it be by nobleness and gentleness and to have good
disport, so that there may be more beasts and that
they shall not be killed falsely, but that one
should always find some to hunt.³³

'Phoebus' comment on conservation is of interest when discussing the three hunts in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. One is left with the impression that the massacre of the female deer on the first day exhausts the supply of these animals in the lord's park; thus creating a diminution in the scale of what is hunted on the following days. The extent of the slaughter is emphasized again by the Gawain-poet just before he gives a description of the curées.

And ay pe lorde of pe londe is lent on his gamnez,
To hunt in holtez and heze at hyndez barayne;
Such a sowme he per slowe bi pat pe sunne heldet,
Of dos and of oper dere, to deme were wonder.
(11. 1319-1322)

There is surely something inappropriate in killing so many animals not before but after the days of feasting. The excessive slaughter of animals and the curious timing of such a hunt may have indicated to a medieval audience that the pastime is not as innocent a diversion as it appears.

Further indications that the three hunts are not mere descriptive diversions in the poem occur in the second hunt also, in which a boar is pursued. We have seen that in reality the boar was the fiercest animal that the European hunter had to face. Its reputation for ferocity and courage won it admiration in the heroic literatures of the Germanic and Celtic peoples while in later times these same characteristics caused the animal to be identified with the anti-Christ in medieval European thought and literature. It is

interesting to examine the boar hunt in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in the context of these cultural attitudes!

The boar slain by the lord of the castle on the second day's hunt has little in common with the demonic swine found in some other Middle English romances, notably Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Sir Eglamour of Artois and The Avowing of Arthur. In the three boar hunts in these romances the boars are described in demonic terms. As the poets dwell on descriptions of the animals' tusks, eyes and hides, the audiences are left in no doubt that a Christian hero is battling with an emissary of the Anti-Christ, or perhaps even with Satan himself. It is curious and telling that the Gawain-poet does not use these traditional associations of the animal at all. The avoidance of religious associations in the description of the boar is surprising since, as Benson remarks, the poet's

. . . debt to romance tradition is most clearly and significantly evident not in his dependence on specific sources . . . but in his use of the general stock of literary conventions that were common property of all romances The poet drew on them for much of his settings, his actions, and most important, his characterizations.³⁵

When Gawain is shown the boar's head in the castle, "pe hende mon hit praysed,/ And let lodly perat pe lorde for to here." (ll. 1633-1634.) This reaction is motivated by a desire to praise the lord rather than any demonic quality possessed by the head. Also the severed head is a reminder of what is literally 'at stake' -- his own head.³⁵

The 'unsloughing' of the boar uncovers no hellish den. The initial meeting between the hunt and the boar takes place

Bitwene a flosche in pat fryth and a foo cragge;
 In a knot bi a clyffe, at pe kerre syde,
 Per as pe rogh roches vnrydely watz fallen,

(11. 1430-1432.)

It is a perfectly natural setting for the animal; one that is far removed from the ominous abodes of the boars encountered by Sir Eglamour or Sir Beves, where one finds caves littered with the bones and helmets of men long dead. The boar is a dangerous but no more than terrestrial animal behaving in a predictable fashion when surrounded by enemies. Typical of its kind, the boar

. . . vnsoundly out soȝt seggez ouer wert;
 On pe sellokest swyn swenged out pere,
 Long sythen fro pe sounder pat sized for olde,
 For he watz breme, bar alper-grattest,
 Ful grymme quen he gronyed; penne greued mony
 For pre at pe fyrst prast he pryȝt to pe erpe,
 And sparred forth good sped boute spyt more.
 (11. 1438-1444.)

There is a picture of an animal well-known to any medieval audience, among whom there would have been many who belonged to the fraternity of the hunt. Brave though the creature is, it flees before the hunt. The chase that ensues is noisy and lively, filled with the shouts of the hunters and the high clear music of the hunting horns. It is a very different boar hunt from the solitary sombre encounters between knight and demonic boar that occur elsewhere in the Middle English romance tradition. Indeed, it is a hunt rather than a quest; unlike Arthur, in The Avowing of Arthur, the lord does not tackle the animal alone and thereby gain Christian approbation. The whole hunt goes in pursuit. The odds are so much against this animal that some measure of sympathy is shown it in the

lines that describe the final encounter. The hounds and archers bring the creature to bay against some rocks by a stream. The poet describes how they

. . . madee hym mawgref his hed for to mwe vtter
 So felle flonez per flete when pe folk gedered.
 Bot 3et pe styffest to start bi stoundez he made,
 Til at pe last he watz so mat he my3t no more renne,
 Bot in pe hast pat he my3t he to a hole wynnez
 Of a rasse bi a rokk per rennez pe boerne.
 He gete pe bonk at his bak, bigynez to scrape,
 Pe frope femed at his mouth vnfayre bi pe wykez,
 Whettez his whyte tuschez; with hym pen irked
 Alle pe burnez so bolde pat hym by stoden
 To nye hym on-ferum, bot ne3e hym non durst for wope;

(11. 1565-1576)

The noble animal, embossed in much the same way as the deer in The Book of the Duchess, garners our sympathy as it readies itself for a heroic last stand. Absent here are any pejorative adjectives to weaken our sympathy or to elicit Christian condemnation of the animal. It stands and waits, as does the rest of the now-tired hunt, for the lord who, surprisingly, is not in the forefront of the chase. He rides up and dismounts spryly. The scene is set now for what one expects to be a heroic confrontation of some magnitude between man and beast. The lord

Foundez fast pur3 pe forth per pe felle bydez.
 Pe wylde watz war of ~~pe~~ wyze with weppen in honde,
 Hef hy3ly pe here, so hetterly he fnast
 Pat fele ferde for pe freke, lest felle hym pe worre.
 Pe swyn settez hym out on pe segge euen,
 Pat pe burne and pe bor were bope vpon hepez
 In pe wy3test of pe water; pe worre hade pat oper,
 For pe mon merkkez hym wel, as pay mette fyrst,
 Set sadly pe scharp in pe slot euen,
 Hit hym vp to ~~pe~~ hult, pat pe hert schyndered,
 And he 3arrande hym 3elde, and 3edoun pe water ful tyt.

(11. 1585-1596)

J.D. Burnley sees this encounter as analogous to Arthur's struggle with the giant of Mount St. Michael in the alliterative Morte Arthure.

He itemizes the closing scene of the boar hunt:

1. Bercilak dismounts, draws his sword, and advances
2. The narrative focus changes to reveal the boar prepared for the onslaught, snorting and raising his hackles
3. The narrative focus changes to the onlookers, who fear for their lord
4. The boar attacks
5. There follows a confused struggle in the water
6. The delivery of the death-blow is precisely detailed
7. The boar is dismembered and the head set "on hize" and borne before the lord.³⁶

Burnley asserts that if this narrative treatment of the encounter is compared with descriptions "within romance tradition, the analogy between the boar hunt and the epic treatment of single combat will become more apparent."³⁷ He then gives an analysis of the struggle in Morte Arthure.

1. Having previously dismounted, Arthur draws his sword and advances. (He speaks words of defiance to his enemy)
2. The narrative focus changes to the giant, who is given a lengthy and hideous description (29 lines) which include some boar-like features
3. The giant attacks
4. A detailed exchange of blows takes place
5. The giant seizes the king
6. The narrative focus changes to the onlookers, whose fear for Arthur is expressed in direct speech
7. There follows a confused struggle in which the protagonists roll down the hillside
8. The monster is slain, but not before injuring the king and provoking a further expression of fear from the onlookers
9. There is ironically expressed joy at Arthur's success, and the giant's head is cut off and taken away as proof of victory.³⁸

Though there are similarities in the two descriptions, there are, one must note, important differences. The giant, described as "caffe

of creatours all" (l. 1064) that eats "crysmede childyre" (l. 1051),³⁹ has more in common with the boars of Sir Beves of Hamtoun and Sir Eglamour of Artois than with the boar in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. There is no "confused struggle in the water" between the lord of the castle and the boar. Expectations of an epic encounter are raised when the lord wades into the stream and the boar leaps into the water towards him, but such an encounter does not occur. Instead the fight is an anti-climax, ending almost as soon as it begins; one deft stroke (ll. 1592-1594) and the hapless, now-dead boar floats down the stream towards the waiting eager hounds. Although the boar is killed with a sword, an act considered to be more noble than killing the animal with a spear,⁴⁰ in the abruptness of this final encounter the Gawain-poet has once again passed over an opportunity to depict the lord of the castle as a truly heroic Christian nobleman. He is no Arthur, Beves or Eglamour slaying the enemies of Christendom. Furthermore, when it comes to the 'undoing' of the boar there is, perhaps, an implication that the lord does not know how to do it. We are told: "Penne a wyȝe pat watz wys vpon wodcraftez/ To vnlace is boar lufly bigynnez." (ll. 1605-1606.) The poet does not present a picture of the slayer undoing the animal, as is done by the author of The Avowing of Arthur.

Pe king couthe of venery
 Polurt him full kyndely;
 Pe hed of pat hardy,
 He sette on a stake;
 Sethun brittuns he pe best,
 As venesun in forest;
 Bothe pe ȝonge and lees
 He longus on a noke.
 (ll. 257-264.)⁴¹

The boar hunt in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight does involve a chase and the prize is only one animal, but, like the deer, the boar, too, was considered 'noble game'; thus, though quantity differs, the quality of the quarry is the same. On the third hunt, however, even the quality of the animal is not the same as the chase turns up nothing better than a fox. J.A. Burrow writes about this hunt:

Much the most important peculiarity of the third hunting scene, however, is its quarry, the fox. A lord hunting a fox is a familiar figure to modern readers -- more so, indeed, than a lord hunting deer or boar; but the evidence clearly suggests that Bercilak's fox-hunt must have come as a surprise to the poem's contemporary audience. Deer and boar were considered 'noble game' and, as such, figure quite frequently in courtly romance, both French and English; but foxes were considered 'vermin' and fox hunts are very rare indeed in the romances -- if indeed there are any at all. It must therefore have seemed odd that the author, after two conventional noble hunts, should resort to a 'foul fox' for his third and final quarry. . . .⁴²

Burrow's statement that fox-hunts are rare in Middle English literature appears to be true. The only other description of a fox-hunt appears in Layamon's Brut where Childric is compared to a hunted fox as he evades Arthur's force. Even here there is no actual hunt; the pastime serves the purpose of comparison.⁴³ In Sir Ferumbras, the only other romance where the sport is mentioned, it gains a mere passing reference (l. 2222).⁴⁴ However, mention of the fox itself, as opposed to the fox-hunt, does occur with more frequency. In Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" the fox "daun Russell" is one of the chief characters who, through cunning, makes off with the vain cock, Chauntecleer. The fox was in the Middle Ages, and still is today, associated with craft and cunning. Beryl Rowland remarks:

When Chaucer's heroine Criseyde says to her uncle, who has arranged for her seduction: "Fox that ye ben . . . ," she indicates that he has been crafty and dissimulating.⁴⁵

In the introductory paragraph of Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art, Kenneth Varty attests to the widespread fame of Reynard, the cunning fox, in medieval Europe:

Who is Reynard the Fox? This is not an easy question to answer, for Reynard is just one of his names, his English name. To the French, he is Renard; to the Flemish, Reinaert or Reinaerde; to the Germans, Reinhart or Reineke; to the Italians, Rainardo; and so on. Narrative poems about this fox were told in all their languages in the Middle Ages.⁴⁶

The fox in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight tries all his wiles to escape his pursuers. The animal is called "Reniarde," thus establishing an association of this particular fox with its cunning counterpart of European fable. Fleeing from the hounds, the animal runs towards the lord and one expects that the animal will be killed by his sword but such is not the case.

Pe wyȝe watz war of pe wylde, and warly abides,
And braydez out pe bryȝt bronde, and at pe best castez.
And he schunt for pe scharp, and schulde haf arered;
A rach rapes hym to, ryȝt er he myȝt,
And ryȝt bifore pe hors fete pay fel on hym alle,
And worried me pis wyly wyth a wroth noyse.

(11. 1900-1905)

While the lord dismounts and saves the carcass from the eager jaws of the hounds, the rest of the hunt

. . . hyȝed hem peder with hornez ful mony,
Ay rechatande aryȝt til pay pe renk seȝen.
Bi pat watz comen his compeny noble,
Alle pat euer ber bugle blowed at ones,
And alle pise oper halowed pat hade no hornes;
Hit watz pe myriest mute pat euer men herde,
Pe rich rurd pat per watz raysed for Renaude saule with lote.

(11. 1910-1917)

The noisy requiem for "Renaude saule" is again an echo of the Reynard of fable. In some versions of this fable a service is performed for the supposedly-dead Reynard.⁴⁷

On the day of the third hunt Gawain stays in bed a particularly long time, dreaming deeply of what may occur on the morrow at the Green Chapel. On entering the room, the lady comments on his tardiness. Opening a window, she exclaims "A! Mon, how may pou slepe,/ Pis morning is so clere?" (ll. 1746-1747.) Recalling the Ovidian argument, taken up by Gaston Phoebus and other proponents of the sport, that sloth leads to a multitude of sins, Gawain has left himself more open to temptation on this occasion than ever before. Though he still resists the amorous advances of the lady, he does fall into the temptation provided by the magic girdle that she offers him. His acceptance of it and his subsequent failure to surrender it to the lord as part of the exchange-of-winnings bargain constitutes his fault, his sole blemish. The fox's vain attempt to avoid death has been compared by Henry L. Savage, as we have seen earlier, with Gawain's action in the castle as he accepts the green girdle in an effort to avert death at the hands of the Green Knight. However, if Gawain resembles Reynard in this last temptation scene, the lady also exhibits vulpine cunning. She is very much "a heretical seductor of the faithful" a role frequently symbolized by a fox.⁴⁸ Having failed in her efforts to seduce Gawain on the sexual level, she veers in her attack towards his apprehension at the coming encounter with the Green Knight by offering him a girdle that supposedly gives magical powers of survival to its wearer. Her insistence that Gawain

not show and, presumably, though not necessarily, thereby exchange the girdle with the lord, seals the trap that has been set. At this point she knows about the exchange-of-winnings agreement with her husband. The agreement has been made in the presence of the ladies of the castle (ll. 1105-1107) and she has witnessed both exchanges of winnings on the two previous evenings (ll. 1371-1394 and ll. 1625-1640).

The further significance of the fox hunt, and indeed of the other hunts, is revealed at the end of the poem where in the final encounter between the Green Knight and Gawain, the former reveals that he and the lord of the castle are one and the same person, endowed with the magical powers of shape shifting. After having received the return blow from the Green Knight's axe and learnt that he, as lord of the castle, was fully aware of, and indeed, had instigated the temptation scenes in the castle, Gawain asks: "How norne 3e yowre ryzt nome, and penne no more?" (l. 2443) The Green Knight readily gives his name and, ignoring Gawain's "penne no more," provides further information.

'Pat schal I telle pe trwly,' quop pat oper penne,
 'Bertilak de Hautdesert I hat in pis londe.
 Purȝ myȝt of Morgne la Faye, pat in my hous lenges,
 And koyntyse of clergie, bi craftes wel lerned,
 Pe maystres of Merlyn mony hatz taken-

. . . .

(ll. 2444-2448)

It is significant that the lord's name is not divulged till the end of the poem. Stephen Manning observes that one is witnessing in the poem 'a remnant of folk belief' that knowledge of a person's name allowed one to have power over that person.⁴⁹ J.A. Burrow echoes

Manning's observations about names when discussing the one-sided exchange of names in the body of the poem.

Bercilak, though he 'discovers' Gawain's name early on . . . simply remains anonymous. But this, though it is not meant to affect our opinion of Bercilak's character, does -- or should -- affect our opinion of Gawain's situation. Proper names, in romance as in other medieval writing, are instruments of knowledge and power. A knight who reveals his identity to others gives them, as in the modern metaphor, a 'handle' -- something to get a hold of. They may know his strengths and weaknesses by report; or his name may itself, more or less obviously reveal them ('Argravayn a la Dure Mayn,' etc.)⁵⁰

In contrast to the late revelation of the Green Knight's name, Gawain's name is revealed early in the poem. During the initial encounter at Camelot he answers the Green Knight's request for identification very straightforwardly. "In god fayth . . . Gawan I hatte," (l. 381) In answer to this declaration of identity, the Green Knight remarks:

3if I pe telle trwly, quen I pe tape have
And pou me smopely hatz smyten, smartly I pe teche
Of my hous and my home and my owen nome,
Pen may pou frayst my fare and forwardez holde;
. . . .

(ll. 406-409)

After receiving the blow the Green Knight gives only that nomenclature that is in agreement with his present condition or shape; it is no personal name but rather a title. "Pe knyzt of pe grene chapel. . . ." (l. 454) Gawain again reveals his name when he arrives at the castle, this time in answer to discreet inquiries put to him by the courtiers. However, once again no names are forthcoming in return. The situation is emphasized in lines 936-937: "Pe lorde laches hym by pe lappe and ledez hym to sytte,/ And couply

hym knowez and callez hym his nome," and further reinforced in the lines that describe both the ladies of the castle (ll. 941-969). The only name to be found in these lines is that of "Wenore" -- Guinevere. The obvious question is why should the poet withhold the name of the lord? That the name of Morgan -- a person famous in Arthurian romance for her antagonistic feelings towards the Arthurian court -- should be withheld is understandable. Would the name of Bercilak reveal pertinent information about the lord of the castle? I suggest that the answer to this question is in the affirmative.

Dorothy Everett acknowledges of the Gawain-poet that:

To play upon associations of all kinds is natural to him, and his magic in large part depends on it, especially in Pearl. In Sir Gawain it is perhaps chiefly by the words he chooses that he calls up associations he wants.⁵¹

One of the verbal categories in which a poet has greatest freedom of choice is that of names. Names are among the most conservative of words, possessing a tenacity that withstands the centuries. In writing about the sources and analogues of the poem, Laura Hibbard Loomis says of Bercilak:

In G.G.K. alone the challenger is named Bercilak . . . ; as the Green Knight he plays the same role, is the same character, as the Challenger in the 'Champion's Bargain.' There he is repeatedly called a bachlach (churl), a trisyllabic word in Irish. Changed in transmission, its meaning lost, the Irish common noun seems to have survived in the English name and best explains its origin.⁵²

The name Bercilak has also been identified by J.R. Hulbert with that of Bertelak, Bercelai, emissary of the False Guinevere in the Prose Lancelot.⁵³ Undoubtedly both L.H. Loomis and Hulbert are correct in

their identification of the sources for the name Bercilak. However, as Charles Moorman points out, it is important to "show how a source is used in the work at hand, how it itself becomes a tool of creation."⁵⁴ The Gawain-poet, I think, associated this name Bercilak with a current medieval word of French rather than Celtic origin. This French word was one of many that crossed the channel with the Norman passion for hunting. It is the name of a particular hunting hound -- the bercelet. The echo between the name Bercilak and bercelet is too distinct for the former not to have had connotations of the latter. These connotations would be particularly strong if the role of Bercilak in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the role of the bercelet in the hunting field were similar, in which case the name of Bercilak would serve not only to identify the lord of the castle but perhaps also to reveal his role in the poem at a far earlier stage. A comparison between the figure of Bercilak in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and that of a bercelet in the hunt demonstrates the artistry of the Gawain-poet.

The bercelet, though not mentioned in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, does appear in hunting scenes in other Middle English romances. In The Parlement of the Thre Ages, the lone hunter mentions this hound as he describes his preparations for stalking the deer.

My lyame than full lightly lete I doun falle,
 And to the bole of a birche my berselett I cowchide;
 I waitted wiesly the wynde by waggyng of leves,
 Stalkede full stilly no stikkes to breke,
 And crepite to crabtre and couerede me thervnder.
 (11. 39-42)⁵⁵

In The Awntyrs of Arthur, the bercelet is mentioned once in a description of preparations that were necessary for a successful hunt. We are told that:

Eche lorde withouten lette
To an oke he hem sette,
With bowe and with barselette,
Vnder pe howes.
(11. 36-39)⁵⁶

In both the above-mentioned works the bercelet is used as a shooting dog, either by poacher or hunter, in that type of deer hunt which used 'stables' rather than the par force method. The mention of the hound in connection with this type of hunting appears to be in accordance with medieval hunting practice. Bror Danielssen, in prefatory discussions to his edition of William Twiti's The Art of Hunting, refers to the pen drawings of the English hunt found in Queen Mary's Psalter (ca. 1300) in which both the par force and stable methods of hunting are shown. Danielssen, in discussing the latter method, mentions that "a bercelet was used to unharbour or drive out the quarry at the commencement of the hunt, and to track it down when it was wounded."⁵⁷ Further definition of this hound's role in the medieval hunt is given in the appendix to The Master of Game where one reads:

BERCELET, barcelette, bercelette is a corruption of the O.Fr. berseret, a hunting dog, dim. of bersier, a huntsman; in Latin, bersarius, French, berser, bercer, to hunt especially with the bow. Bercel, biercel, meant a butt or target. . . .

Given the above derivation, it may be fairly accepted that bercelet was a dog fitted to accompany a hunter who was going to shoot his game -- a shooting dog. The "Master of Game's" allusion also points to this. He says some mastiffs . . . become "berslettis, and also to bring well and fast a wanlace about." (p. 204)

The following definition of the term wanlace is given in the same appendix:

WANLACE. Winding in the chase. . . .Which probably means that some of these dogs become shooting dogs, and could hunt up game to the shooter well and fast by ranging and circling. (p. 264)

In The Avowing of Arthur, the bercelet is portrayed a little differently. It is shown here as a hound used to keep the boar at bay.

Pay held him the boar fast in his hold;
He brittunt bercelettus bold,
Bothe pe zunge and pe old,
And raste hom e rest;
Pe raches comun rengnyng him by,
And bayet him full boldely,
Butte per was non so hardy
Durste on pe fynde fast.
(11. 97-104)⁵⁸

The portrayal is again realistic. The hound was a mastiff, not in the modern sense of a particular breed of dog, but according to the medieval meaning of the word -- a mixed breed, a mongrel dog. It was usually a big, hardy creature that was used at times for tackling wild boar.⁵⁹

The mention of bercelets in other Middle English romances, and the roles that they play in these works, together with the verification of these roles in the hunting manuals of the day, provide an explanation of Sir Bercelak's name. The explanation gives strength to the final revelation concerning Morgan le Fay's role in the poem. Some critics have felt that this revelation is a weakness in the poem. For instance, G.V. Smithers states that:

The explanation . . . that it was Morgan who arranged the challenge to the Beheading Game . . .

is palpably an attempt to supply specific and explicit motivation for the whole of the action. . . . Morgan la Fee is a distinctly pallid presence in this poem as it stands, she makes little impression at the one point where she is introduced in person, and she fades from one's mind as the story progresses.⁶⁰

It is doubtful, however, if a medieval audience would see the introduction of Morgan in such a light. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight gains strength in being a twice-told tale. Listened to for the first time, the divulgence of Sir Bercilak's name would bring connotations that would be confirmed in retrospective thought. Listened to for a second time, prior knowledge of the lord's name allows one to appreciate better the Gawain-poet's skill. As the poem unfolds one is aware that the role played by the Green Knight -- cum -- lord of the castle is parallel in many ways to that played by a bercelet in the hunt. Morgan is the hunter, or, in this case, the huntress par excellence⁶¹ and Sir Bercilak performs the role of the bercelet in her hunt. He rushes into the court of Camelot and hunts up, or 'unharbours,' noble game in the form of Gawain who is forced to leave the court in order to keep the exchange-of-blows bargain. Gawain's subsequent journey in search of the Green Chapel, and his stay at the castle where he unknowingly meets Morgan strongly parallel certain aspects of a deer hunt with stables. In this form of the hunt, the animals flee from those who they think are the hunters into the close proximity of the real hunters who stand waiting in a "tryste close." The real huntress Morgan quietly awaits the arrival of Gawain in her "tryste close" -- the castle. He arrives, sees her, and passes by her without full knowledge of who

she is. Like the deer, he is perturbed, has a sense of impending danger, and is unable to judge accurately the direction from which the most danger is likely to come. Again like the frightened deer in a hunt with stables who see, and are meant to see, only the most obvious dangers presented by the bercelets and the beaters, so too Gawain sees only the frontal attacks of the Green Knight and the lady in the castle.

It is, therefore, perhaps not accidental that the first of the three hunts in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is not a deer hunt by the par force method but one using stables. Equally important is the fact that this hunt is to be found at the very centre of the poem. Descriptions of the deer hunt, along with its accompanying temptation scene, span the central eleven stanzas of the poem. The type of deer hunt in which a bercelet plays a central part reflects in form and movement the greater hunt that is the concern of the whole poem -- a hunt in which Sir Bercilak plays a pivotal role.

Another reason for the deer hunt being one with "stables" rather than one employing the par-force method may lie in the image of encirclement that it provides. There appears to be repeated imagery of circle and encirclement in each of the hunts. The encirclement imagery is definite in the deer hunt; the animals "Hized to pe hyze, bot heterly pay were/ Restayed with pe stablye, pat stoutly ascryed." (ll. 1152-1153). The startled, confused deer may represent the court at Camelot as it is rudely disturbed by the sudden intrusion of the Green Knight. The hunting of female deer

may not only reflect actual practise, but also carries an echo of Sir Bercilak's comment that Morgan changed him into the Green Knight "For to haf greued Gaynour and gart hir to dyze." (l. 2460) In the boar hunt an image of a circle is suggested as the boar is first found and later slaughtered in places that are strikingly similar. At the beginning of the chase, the hunters

pen al in a semble sweyed togeder,
 Bitwene a flosche in pat fryth and a foo cragge;
 In a knot bi a clyffe, at pe kerre syde
 Per as pe rogh rocher vnrydely watz fallen
 Pay ferden to pe fyndyng, and frekez hem after;

(ll. 1429-1433)

Later, after a day's pursuit, the animal ". . . in pe hast pat he myȝt he to a hole wynez/ Of a rasse bi a rokk per rennez pe boerne." (ll. 1569-1570). Certainly these two places are nearly identical in the landscape of imagination, with the images of rock and water suggesting, on an allegorical level, castle and moat. Perhaps two castles and moats are signified -- pointing to Gawain's journey from castle to castle. The boar may also be symbolic of the courage that Gawain has displayed. In the fox hunt there is again an image of encirclement as the fox tries to break out of the wood. At one point the animal

Went haf wylt of pe wode with wylez fro pe houndes;
 Penne watz he went, er he wyst, to a wale tryster,
 Per pre pro at a prich prat hym at ones,
 al graye.

(ll. 1711-1714)

A while later ". . . he watz halawed, when hapelez hym metten,/" (l. 1723) Finally, as the animal comes out of a spinney, the wary and wily lord brings about its death.

Pe wyȝe watz war of pe wylde, and warly abides,
 And braydez out pe bryȝt bronde, and at pe best casteȝ.
 And he schunt for pe scharp, and schulde haf arered;
 A rach rapes hym to

(11. 1900-1903)

. The two attempts of the fox to escape may reflect Gawain's attempts to leave the castle; the first time, Gawain almost leaves but is dissuaded by the host; the second time, he merely asks to go but the lord objects. The fox's final attempt to escape is thwarted by the lord and the brachet; Gawain fails to escape from his predicament unscathed by actions of the lord and his wife. Indeed, the lord, the lady and Morgan may be seen to outfox the lesser "Reniarde," Gawain.

Another interpretation of animal symbolism is possible, I suggest, with the fox symbolizing not Gawain but the world of those who have practised dissemblance to a greater extent than he has. In a broad overview of the poem one notes that the second hunt, which has 'noble game' in the boar as its quarry, links the deer hunt, again 'noble game,' with a hunt in which the fox, an animal never considered to be 'noble game,' is the quarry. There is a parallel in Gawain's role, as he, a noble knight, journeys from the noble world of Camelot to a region in which trickery and dissemblance, attributes long associated with the fox, hold sway under a veneer of apparent nobility.

The third hunt, therefore, in which the fox is the rather surprising quarry, demands further attention. As has been pointed out earlier, the fox hunt is rare in Middle English literature;

indeed, details of a fox hunt such as those given in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight appear to have been unique to the poem. The actions of the fox on the hunting field have been compared, justifiably, to Gawain's actions at the castle. But are these the only associations that can be made? I think not, particularly when this animal and its associations are seen in retrospect after Sir Bercilak's disclosures at the end of the poem.

The mention of the name Reynard, along with the noisy requiem given the animal, deliberately associate this fox with the widespread folk legends about the famous fox, Reynard, an animal distinguished by cunning, a cunning that was often executed through dissemblance. Through this association with dissemblance, "Reniarde" in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight comes to symbolize not the world of Camelot and Gawain but the world of Morgan and the shape-shifting Green Knight.

There are some ideas and facts about the fox, well recorded in the Reynard cycle, that lend credence to such a suggestion. Though it seems that the stories about Reynard had some difficulty in negotiating the English Channel in written literary forms,⁶² there is no doubt, from other evidence, that the cycle was well known in Medieval England. Kenneth Varty shows conclusively that stories about the wily fox provided popular subject matter for craftsmen in the plastic arts. Varty has found numerous church decorations the length and breadth of England that portray some part of the Reynard cycle.⁶³ He comments that

. . . scenes of the fox being hunted are few by comparison with scenes of the fox hunting, which are extremely common.⁶⁴

The figure of the hunting, rather than the hunted, fox is reflected in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight by the chief hunters in the poem -- Morgan and her accomplices, the Green Knight and the lady in the castle.

Another characteristic about the fox which helps to associate the animal with the castle is the way in which it sometimes catches prey.⁶⁵ According to the *Physiologus* (and later verified by observation) the fox sometimes feigns death, thereby luring other wildlife to its supposedly harmless body. The false death of the fox is echoed by the false death of the Green Knight at Camelot who, like Reynard, is not dead when he is expected to be.

A third parallel is to be found in the figure of "the fox religious" of the Reynard cycle and Sir Bercilak as he listens to Gawain's confession and reprimands him for his slight fault.

Kenneth Varty writes in "The Fox Religious":

Indeed, one of the commonest roles played by Reynard in order to gull his intended prey, or inflict an injury on an enemy, is that of the holy man. This is especially true of the poems derived from the Roman de Renard and its foreign adaptations. It is not therefore surprising to find that quite a large proportion of the fourteenth-fifteenth- and sixteenth-century representations of the fox show him in a religious guise or pose.⁶⁶

The major part of this chapter deals with the widespread occurrence of the figure of the preaching or religious fox in carvings found in churches all over England. Though the Green Knight has already gulled his prey, Gawain, and the physical injury, the nick in Gawain's neck, has been inflicted, there is something of the

preaching fox in him as he leans on his axe and lectures Gawain.

For hit is my wede pat pou werez, pat ilke wouen girdel,
 Myn owen wyf hit pe weued, I wot wel for sope.
 Now know I wel py cosses, and py costes als,
 And pe wowyng of my wyf: I wrozt hit myseluen.
 I sende hir to assay pe, and sothly me pynkkez
 On pe fautlest freke pat euer on fote zede;
 As perle bi pe quite pese is of prys more,
 So is Gawayn, in god fayth, bi oper gay knyghtez.
 Bot here yow lakked a lyttel, sir, and lewte yow wonted;
 Bot pat watz for no wylyde werke, ne wowyng nauper,
 Bot for ze lufed your lyf; pe lasse I yow blame.'
 (11. 2358-2368)

Just as a fox reveals the trap of its feigned death when it is too late for its prey to escape, here the Green Knight reveals the full extent of the cunning and dissemblance that has trapped Gawain when it is too late for Gawain to do anything.

After having witnessed Gawain's discomfort at his revelations, the Green Knight laughingly tells Gawain:

"I halde hit hardly hole, pe harme pat I hade.
 Pou art confessed so clere, beknowen of py mysses,
 And hatz pe penuance apert of pe poynt of myn egge
 I halde pe polysed of pat plyzt, and pured as clene
 As pou hade neuer forfeited syden pou watz fyrst borne;
"
 (11. 2390-2394)

These lines coming after the Green Knight's revelation of his role in the temptation scenes at the castle, and before his revelation of Morgan le Fay's role in the plot, carry with them echoes of the preaching fox. Though the Green Knight acts here as Gawain's "freend and his compeer," his pardoning of Gawain, set as it is between two revelations of cunning to which he has been a party, may have as much efficacy as those pardons that "comen from Rome al hoot" and were distributed by that supreme example of the preaching fox, Chaucer's Pardoner in The Canterbury Tales.

CONCLUSION

The many historical and cultural forces that operated on the Medieval English hunt made it a unique institution quite different from the hunts of other ages. The harsh forest laws which preserved game for the nobility and the elaborate etiquette that surrounded the sport reflected and reaffirmed the highly developed medieval sense of order. The pastime's association with medieval nobility made it a ready vehicle for authors of chivalric romance. The use of the activity in Middle English literature is not haphazard; deer, boars, and their respective hunts, are not used interchangeably for the same authorial purposes.

Deer and deer hunting scenes in Middle English reflect the similar attitudes of pagan and Christian tradition. The stag-messenger, a widespread motif, is often used to lead characters to appointed areas where the main action of the work takes place. Often a hero is led away from his companions into the realm of adventure by pursuing a stag, hart or hind. The act itself not only achieves the purpose of isolation, but also establishes the protagonist as a "primus inter pares," as he outrides noble companions, he affirms his worthiness to deal with whatever adventure may befall him. Sometimes the animal disappears as soon as its purpose has been accomplished. Indeed, in Generydes the reappearance of the guide animal confirms the creative aspect of Auferius' adventure, to beget to the hero Generydes. At other times, the violence that occurs in the pursuits prefigures the physical struggle in the ensuing adventure. The intruding hunt at Arthur's wedding feast causes deliberate violence and confusion;

the biting of the deer by the brachet and the accompanying overturning of a knight and a sideboard represent the turmoil of the surrounding world that the newly organized chivalric society will have to contend with. Again, in Malory's "Arthur and Accolon" the vignette of the slaughtered hart being bitten by a brachet, with other hounds set to pounce on its carcass, prefigures the violent adventures of Arthur, King Uryence and Sir Accolon that are only contained by their Christian courtesy and loyalty. Sometimes the way the hero cut up the carcass of the dead animal signified his noble birth. In Sir Tristrem and The Lyfe of Ipomydon, the true place of Tristrem and Ipomydon in medieval social order is revealed by their ability to perform the curee.

In Malory's Morte Darthur, one can see Christian adaptation of the stag-messenger motif as heroes or figures of authority are led by a deer hunt to situations in which disorder and distress are temporarily triumphant. Chaucer uses the sport for a similar purpose on two occasions. In "The Knight's Tale," the device of the deer hunt leads Duke Theseus to Palamon and Arcite; at the same time, imagery of the hunt signifies an ordered, controlled world. The procession of Theseus, Ypolita and Emyle is stately and measured; knowledge of the hart's probable route further emphasizes control. The life and death struggle present in the chase is avoided since the hunt proper never takes place; instead, it is replaced by the vigorous unrelenting fight between Palamon and Arcite. Theseus does not participate in slaughter, but prevents

Palamon and Aricte from doing so. Not only does he stop the fight but arranges an orderly resolution by means of a tournament in which the participants stop short of killing one another. Arcite's death can be blamed more on the gods than on man. In The Book of the Duchess, the hunt conducted by the Emperor Octavian, himself a figure of authority, leads the dreamer-narrator to the Black Knight. As the deer apparently escapes into the forest, so too the Black Knight sets out for the castle cured of his disorder, excessive grief, by the cathartic value of the dialogue with the dreamer. In The Parlement of the Thre Ages, the deer hunt does not involve any traversing of earthly terrain as the poacher-hunter stands utterly still to effect the kill. The poet concentrates on the final part of a deer hunt, the curée, to remind one of earthly order that the poacher has both disregarded, by entering the king's forest, and attempted to observe, by performing the ritual. The usual movement involved in hunting is replaced by an interior journey as the poacher is led by a dream-argument to a universal order made manifest by the inescapable fact of death. In The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn, the Arthurian court is shown to be efficient in earthly pursuits, as it conducts a hunt with bows and stables. Just as it is about to exert its dominion over the fearful animals of the forest, it is reminded of its own mortality and the necessary requirements for better accommodation to heavenly order.

Unlike the deer, the boar enjoyed earlier cultural associations among Celtic and Germanic peoples that conflicted with

those imposed by a Christianity that emerged from lands around the Mediterranean. Both influences are found in Middle English literature. In the earlier cultures of Northern Europe the animal's refusal to succumb without a fight and its propensity for attack when cornered were seen as admirable and courageous. Therefore, in some works, such as Layamon's Brut, boar similes are used to praise the courage of a hero. Indeed, the strength and daring of the boar were seen as defensive magic, sometimes on a national scale. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae, and later in Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle, Arthur is referred to as the Boar of Cornwall, a figure of national protection. Chaucer, Malory and anonymous medieval writers use boar similes to aid in describing the valour and determination of such heroes as Lancelot, Palamon, Arcite and Mangys.

However, the dominant connection in Middle English literature is one stemming from medieval Christianity, in which the animal is associated with sin and the Anti-Christ. In John Gower's procession on the Seven Deadly Sins, it is the steed of Wrath; in the Ancrene Riwe, one meets the boar of dead sloth, while in Lydgate's Pilgrimage of the Life of Man the creature is depicted as the steed of Venus, goddess of lechery and lust. Such deleterious identification found support in holy writ and followed the animal into some hunting manuals. In Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, Queen Reason accords the animal damning allegory which clearly places it opposite the deer. Whereas she draws favourable comparisons between the deer and the Christian, the boar, she advises, is proud and has many attributes that may be compared with the characteristics

of sinners.

Boar hunts in three Middle English romances leave no doubt as to Christian influence. In Sir Beves of Hamtoun, Sir Eglamour of Artois, and The Avowing of Arthur, there is no vestige of sympathy or admiration for the animal depicted as a fiend. These encounters follow a different formula from the deer hunts. There is no pattern of the hunt leading the hero to an area of disorder that itself has no connection with the hunted animal. Instead, the animal is the centre of disorder. No use is made of boars to depict a harmonious, ordered world; descriptions of the creatures' dens show a world of death and disorder. Having ravaged the local countryside, the ugly creature instills dread among the local populace and attracts the attention of a hero. The ensuing formulaic struggle ends with an implicit suggestion of heavenly help having been granted the hero, as prayer is offered just before or after the final victory. Both creature and hero are stripped of power as horses, spears and tusks fall victim to the fray. The hero, left with only his sword, is at a disadvantage against the powerful beast and divine help is needed. There is little trouble in seeing the encounters as skirmishes in the battle between good and evil.

Sometimes more implicit connections exist between the boar and disorder. The appearance of boars often parallels or signals the onset of misfortune. In Sir Beves of Hamtoun and Layamon's Brut boar hunts precipitate treacherous human ambush, while in Guy of Warwick, The Romance of Partenay, and Malory's "Launcelot and Elaine," encounters with the animals lead to death or grave injury.

The Gawain-poet departs from the conventional uses of the hunt. Though three hunts are described at length in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the conventional roles accorded deer and boar hunting in Middle English literature do not obtain in the first two hunts. The third hunt in pursuit of the fox is unique and, as far as can be ascertained, has no connection with convention whatever. The deer hunt does not help so much in portraying an ordered world as depicting delight earned at the expense of distressed, hapless animals. The type of hunt conducted allows a wholesale slaughter reminiscent of the butchery practised by the earl in Sir Degrevant. While the earl leaves the carcasses without further attention, members of Sir Bercilak's court, though not Sir Bercilak himself, do perform the curée. Considering the use of this ritual in Sir Tristrem, The Lyfe of Impomydon and The Parlement of the Thre Ages, one cannot be certain whether the curée is described to emphasize the nobility of Sir Bercilak's court or to keep death at the centre of attention. The boar hunt also differs significantly from other major encounters with the animal in medieval romance. Sir Bercilak conducts a hunt rather than a quest. The animal, though massive and fierce, makes no stand at a den filled with the bones and helmets of Christians, as do the creatures in Sir Beves of Hamtoun or Sir Eglamour of Artois; a brave animal, finally standing at bay, it is described in terms reminiscent of earlier Germanic attitudes. Though ingredients for an epic encounter are present, no real battle takes place. There is little to suggest it is a struggle between good and evil. The "undoing" of the creature once again prolongs the

focus of the poem on death. The fox hunt, standing solitarily outside the main stream of Middle English literature, allows little comparison to be made. However, though the quarry is hardly noble game, the hunt is delineated at length as the path of the fox is described.

The hunts connect with the whole poem in several ways. The outdoor hunting scenes contrast strongly with the enclosed bedroom scenes. The length and descriptive detail of the former balance the length and conversational detail of the latter. The enclosed world of the bedroom in which intrigue is stealthily pursued is pointed up by the open exhilarating world of the hunts. The successful conclusion of all three hunts, with the death of the animals particularized, adds cumulatively to a sense of inevitability which reinforces the sense of apprehension felt for Gawain as he journeys towards the Green Chapel. The different animals hunted symbolize the main protagonists, the deer suggesting the noble Arthurian court, the boar reflecting the brave Gawain, and the fox, associated with the cunning Reynard, standing for Morgan and her accomplices. Hunting terminology is put to sophisticated use as the name of Sir Bercilak echoes closely the name of a hound used for driving game to waiting hunters, the bercelet.

In Middle English literature, there are definite authorial purposes associated with deer, and boar hunts. That these uses are connected with the ordered and polysemous cosmology of Medieval Europe seems certain. In some works exhibiting a simple Christianity,

the link is explicit; in Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale" and The Book of the Duchess subtle use is made of the sport's associations, while in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight the Gawain-poet also finds great scope for imaginative uses of the pastime.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Bror Danielssen, ed., William Twiti: The Art of Hunting (Stockholm: Almaqvist and Wiksell International, 1977), p. 1.

²Danielssen, p. 78.

³Borchers does not include Chaucer, or the hunt in The Parlement of the Thre Ages, a dream-vision work, in his survey.

⁴The general articles on the hunt are heavily cynegetic in content with little or no reference to literature.

⁵Marcelle Thiébaux, "The Mouth of the Boar as a Symbol in Medieval Literature," Romance Philology, 22, No. 3 (1968), 287.

CHAPTER ONE

¹Marcelle Thiébaux, "The Noble Art of Venery," The Saturday Book, No. 26 (1966), p. 130.

²Michael Brander, Hunting and Shooting: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), pp. 41-42.

³See Brander, pp. 42-45.

⁴Henry L[yttleton] Savage, "Hunting in the Middle Ages," Speculum, 8, No. 1 (1933), p. 32.

⁵John Earle, ed., Two of the Saxon Chronicles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1845), p. 222.

⁶Dorothy Whitelock, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), pp. 164-65.

⁷Doris Mary Stenton, English Society in the Early Middle Ages (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 106.

⁸G.J. Turner, ed., Select Pleas of the Forest, Selden Society Publications, 13 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1901), pp. 79-80.

⁹Turner, pp. 79-80. Parallel text translation.

¹⁰Turner, p. 23.

¹¹Turner, p. 23. Parallel text translation.

¹²Turner, p. xvi. In 1238 England was divided into two provinces for the purpose of forest administration. A justice of the forest was appointed for each area. Under these two justices were the wardens of the forest. Turner states that: "Usually a warden had the custody of a single forest, but in some cases he had the charge of a group of forests lying apart from one another."

¹³Turner, pp. xxi-xxii.

¹⁴Turner, p. xii.

¹⁵Turner, pp. x-xiv.

¹⁶See Rachel Hands, English Hawking and Hunting in The Boke of St. Albans (Oxford: University Press, 1975), p. 119.

¹⁷Brander, p. 33.

¹⁸Brander, p. 33.

¹⁹Savage, p. 34.

²⁰William and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., The Master of Game, by Edward, Second Duke of York: The Oldest English Book on Hunting (London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), p. 9. The Baillie-Grohman's edition of The Master of Game appears to be the only one available at the present time. Bror Danielssen promises a critical edition of the work based on 24 extant manuscripts, in his series Cynegetica Anglica (The Mediaeval English Hunt. A series in 12 volumes). Danielssen's edition was not available at the time of writing this thesis.

²¹Brander, p. 27.

²²Bror Danielssen, ed., William Twiti: The Art of Hunting 1327 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell. International, 1977), p. 21. Twiti actually mentions three types of hunts: The Chase of Forloin, The Perfect, and the hunt with Archers, Greyhounds and Stably. (p. 11 and p. 49) The first two, however, appear to be forms of par-force hunting.

²³Bibliothèque Nationale MS Français 616. Facsimile edition of Phebus de foys le livre de la chasse (1976), fol. 67. The gathering at the edge of the forest was a favourite subject for Medieval illustrators of the sport. In Gaston Phoebus' Livre de la Chasse (1327) this part of the hunt is depicted in a lively illustration. It shows a feast in progress, with spread tablecloths on the forest floor, while the huntsman is showing the lord the droppings of an animal.

²⁴The placing of the extra limer in the English hunt is of particular interest in discussion of the whelp in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess. See the third chapter of this thesis.

²⁵Gunnar Tilander, ed., Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio 1 (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1932), pp. 46-47.

²⁶See Oliver Farrar Emerson's article "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting" for an in depth discussion of the use of the word embosed in English literature. Romanic Review 13, No. 2 (1922), 117-21.

²⁷Wounds from the tines of a deer were very painful. In The Master of Game harts are called "wonderfully perilous beasts," on account of the great pain that men suffered while recovering from wounds inflicted by a hart. Indeed, it seems that these wounds were more likely to be fatal than those inflicted by the tusks of a boar. Edward, Duke of York, quotes an old saw: "after the boar the leech and after the hart the bier." (p. 23)

²⁸Thiébaux, p. 133.

²⁹The pertinent section of Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio, section 28 of Volume 1, is appended, as Appendix A, to this thesis.

³⁰Marcelle Thiébaux, "The Medieval Chase," Speculum, 42, No. 2 (1967), 271-72.

³¹These remarks that differentiate between the arts of woodsmancraft and hunting are an original addition in Edward, Duke of York's translation. They are not in Gaston Phoebus' Livre de Chasse.

³²Bror Danielssen, p. 51.

³³Rachel Hands, pp. 177-80.

³⁴Hands, p. xiv.

³⁵Hope Allen, "The Fifteenth Century "Association of Beasts, of Birds, and of Men": The Earliest Text with "Language for Carvers," PMLA, 51, No. 2 (1936), 602.

³⁶M.Y. Offord, ed., The Parlement of the Thre Ages, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 246 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 47.

³⁷Richard Fitzneale, De Necessariis Observantiis Scaccarii Dialogus qui vulgo dicitur Dialogus de Scaccario, trans., Charles Johnson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1950), pp. 59-60.

³⁸Johnson, pp. 59-60. Parallel text translation.

³⁹Francis James Child, ed., English and Scottish Ballads Vol. 4 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), p. 26.

⁴⁰Niccolò Machiavelli, Il Principe (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1963), pp. 72-3.

⁴¹Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince and the Discourses, trans. Max Richter (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 54.

⁴²John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 398-99.

⁴³Cited by John Edwin Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1400 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 389.

⁴⁴Carleton Brown, ed., English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 85.

⁴⁵Thiébaux, "The Medieval Chase," p. 264.

⁴⁶Gilbert White, Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne (London: Macmillan and Co., 1875), p. 512.

⁴⁷F.D. Matthew, ed., The English Works of Wyclif, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 74 (London: Trübner and Co., 1880), p. 149.

⁴⁸Ovid's statement in Remedia Amoris is more specifically connected to hunting providing an antidote to love. The idea is further explored in the second chapter of this thesis.

⁴⁹Thiébaux, "The Medieval Chase," pp. 264-65.

⁵⁰Tillander, ed., pp. 117-118. Section 63, which deals with the deer, is given in Appendix B to this thesis.

⁵¹The story of St. Eustace is recounted in Chapter Two of this thesis.

⁵²Tillander, ed., pp. 145-9. Section 76, which deals with the allegorization of the boar, is reproduced in Appendix C to this thesis.

⁵³Denys Hay, The Medieval Centuries (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 56. Though the "Great Chain of Being" concept was not formalized fully until the Renaissance, its foundations were laid in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER TWO

¹T.H. White, The Book of Beasts: being a translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century (London: Johnathan Cape, 1954), p. 231.

²Emile Mâle, The Gothic Image, trans., Dora Nussey (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 33.

³Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, eds., Reliquiae Antiquae. Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts (1841: rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), p. 216.

⁴This modern English version is that of Brian Stone, Medieval English Verse (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 92.

⁵Wright and Halliwell, Reliquiae Antiquae, p. 217.

⁶Stone, Medieval English Verse, p. 93.

⁷C. Horstmann, ed., Altenglische Legenden (1881: rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), p. 212.

⁸G.V. Smithers, ed., Kyng Alisaunder, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 227 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 26-28.

⁹Julius Zupitza, ed., The Romance of Guy of Warwick, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, Nos. 42, 49, 50. (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1883), pp. 399-401.

¹⁰Carleton Brown, ed., English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 85.

¹¹James Orchard Halliwell, ed., The Romance of Isumbras in The Early English Metrical Romances of Perceval, Isumbras, Eglamour, and Degrevant, The Thornton Romances, No. 30 (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1844), p. 90.

¹²See Chapter One, p. 24.

¹³L.F. Casson, ed., The Romance of Sir Degrevant. Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 221 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 6.

¹⁴Laura Sumner, ed., The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell (Northampton, Mass.: Smith College, 1959), pp. 1-2.

¹⁵W. Aldis Wright, ed., Generydes, A Romance in Seven-line Stanzas, Early English Text Society, Original Series, Nos. 55, 70 (London: N. Trübner and Co., 1878), pp. 1-2

¹⁶Associations of the boar with evil, particularly with treachery, are examined in Chapter Three of this thesis.

¹⁷Eugene Vinaver, ed., The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, 3 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967) All quotations from the works of Sir Thomas Malory in this thesis are taken from this edition.

Vinaver, writing about the French Prose Romance of Tristan, states: "It is significant of Malory's reaction to this romance that while his version of it is about six times shorter, the reduction is not purely mechanical: the English author clearly aims at some degree of simplification within the material which he retains. He begins in medias res with an account of the hero's birth, which in the French is preceded by a long description of Tristan's ancestry. . . ." (Vol. III, p. 1443)

¹⁸Helen Newstead, "The Growth of the Tristan Legend" in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed., Roger Sherman Loomis (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 122-33.

Of the name Tristan, Helen Newstead writes: "The clue to the earliest stage of the Tristan legend is the name of the hero. It has long been acknowledged that Tristan owes his name to a certain Drust, son of Talorc, a king of the Picts, who reigned in northern Scotland about 780. The names Drust and Talorc, and their derivatives Drostan and Talorcan, appear repeatedly as royal names in the chronicles of the Picts. . . . In the Welsh triads the name appears as Drystan or Trystan, son of Tallwch -- as close an equivalence in sound as one can expect to find in the transmission of proper names from one language to another." (p. 125)

¹⁹Tristram's expertise in the curée, and his mastery of the complex hunting terminology win him this title. His skills in both these areas are explored later in this chapter.

²⁰The intrusion of the Green Knight into the holiday celebrations at Camelot in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

²¹D.H. Green, "The Pathway to Adventure," Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 8 (1977), p. 185.

²²Green, p. 187.

²³See Alfred Nutt, Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail (1888: rpt. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1965), p. 137. This episode of the brachet and the blood on the ground is absent from Malory's probable French source, the prose romance Perlesvaus. The blood on the ground motif appears to be of Celtic origin and have its ultimate origin in the Irish saga of the Sons of Usnech.

²⁴Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., The Mabinogion (London: Everyman's Library, 1970), p. ix.

²⁵Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, p. 4.

²⁶Tom Peete Cross, "The Celtic Elements in the Lays of Lanval and Graelent," Modern Philology, 12, No. 10 (1915), 592.

²⁷William Henry Schofield, "The Lays of Graelent and Lanval, and the story of Wayland," PMLA, 15(1900), 130.

²⁸For further discussion of the Celtic sources of the Breton lays one should consult two articles in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed., Roger Sherman Loomis. The articles in question are:

- a) Ernest Hoepffner, "The Breton Lais," pp. 112-21.
- b) Richard Sherman Loomis, "The Oral Diffusion of the Arthurian Legend," pp. 52-63.

²⁹M.B. Ogle, "The Stag-Messenger Episode," American Journal of Philology, 38, No. 4 (1916), 411-12.

³⁰The prose romance referred to by Ogle is Le Roman de Tristan en Prose. In the edition by Renée L. Curtis, the hunting episode is brief: "Li rois Meliadus estoit un jor alez chacier a grant compaignie de gent. Et quant il se fus mis en la chace, il encontra une demoisele don païs, qui tant amoit le roi de grant amor qu'ele n'amoit riens fors que li" (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1963), p. 124.

³¹Ogle, p. 394.

³²Some of the examples cited by Ogle include the tale of Picus and Circe, found in Ovid's Metamorphoses, in which Circe leads Picus to her by means of a boar hunt; the tale of Saron, a King of Epidauria, found in the writings of Pausanias, in which Saron chases a hind into the sea and is drowned; Pindar's hind on Mount Keryneia which was pursued by Hercules into the Other World; a rabbinical legend in which God, because he is angry with David, causes a stag to lead him into the land of the Philistines where he is made captive, and a story in the Hindu Ramayana in which the god Rama is led off into a forest by a stag.

³³See Anne Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 334. Miss Ross also notes that among the legends of the Celts there are some that concern "the hunting of a magical deer which leads the hunters into unexpected and sometimes symbolic situations."

³⁴ Peter Gelling and Hilda Ellis Davidson, The Chariot of the Sun (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1969), p. 123.

³⁵ David Brown, Anglo-Saxon England (London: The Bodley Head, 1978), pp. 55-56.

³⁶ C.L. Wrenn, ed., Beowulf (London: Harrap, 1958), p. 313.

³⁷ Gervase Mathew, The Court of Richard II (London: John Murray, 1968), pp. 27-28.

³⁸ Benjamin Williams, Chronicque de la Traison et Mort de Richart Deux Roy D'Engleterre (1846: rpt. Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964), p. xxxviii.

³⁹ Mabel Day and Robert Steele, eds., Mum and the Sothsegger, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 199 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 7.

⁴⁰ Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, eds., The Sultan of Babylon in Middle English Metrical Romances (New York: Prentice Hall Inc., 1930), pp. 275-76.

⁴¹ See J.D. Bruce, "The Breaking of the Deer in Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight," Englische Studien, 32 (1903), 23-36.

⁴² George P. McNeill, ed., Sir Tristrem, Scottish Text Society, No. 8 (Edinburgh: William Blackwell and Sons, 1886), p. 9.

⁴³ Henry Weber, ed., The Lyfe of Ipomydon in Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries: Published from Ancient Manuscripts, 2 (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1810), p. 283.

⁴⁴ McNeill, p. 105. The word "martirs" refers to "Cattle killed at Martlemas for winter provision," which, according to McNeill, are still called "marts" in Scotland.

⁴⁵ This is the fullest account of the curée in Middle English literature, in which the breaking of the deer, the rewarding of the hounds and the members of the hunt are all mentioned. This description is fuller than those which occur in The Parlement of the Thre Ages (discussed in Chapter Two) and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (discussed in Chapter Four).

⁴⁶ François Remigereau, "Tristan Maitre de Venerie," Romania, No. 58 (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Edouard Champion, 1932), p. 237. This legend about Tristrem being "the father of English hunting" is discussed at length by François Remigereau in his article "Tristan Maitre de Venerie." In the final paragraph of his article

Remigereau writes: "Ainsi, et ce sera notre conclusion, si cette légende, assez récente, de Tristan initiateur de la vénerie en Angleterre, a été sous l'influence du Sir Tristrem, nettement anglaise de formation et d'esprit, il faut en rechercher l'origine et la cause dans le Tristan de Thomas, la raison et l'occasion dans l'introduction des pratiques de la vénerie française en Angleterre par les Normands. . . ." (Thus, and it will be our conclusion, if this rather recent legend of Tristrem being the initiator of venery in England has been, due to the influence of Sir Tristrem, clearly English in formation and spirit, one must look for its origin and cause in the Tristan of Thomas, and the reason and occasion in the introduction of French practices of venery to England by the Normans.

⁴⁷ Vinaver, p. 683. La Beall Isode warns Tristrem about going hunting unarmed in a dangerous country, full of perilous knights and ruled by the treasonous Mark. Tristrem heeds her advice by arming himself on future hunts. Like Arthur, it is while he is on one of these hunts that a hart leads him into the proximity of the Questing Beast and a well or fountain. Again like Arthur, Tristrem gains some information as Sir Palomydes tells him of King Mark's imprisonment.

⁴⁸ Weber, p. 260.

⁴⁹ The hunt in The Lyfe of Ipomydon appears to be one involving bows and stables rather than the par force method. Thus, the princess can stay in "hyr pavyloun" and witness the curée of several animals.

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Knights Tale" in The Canterbury Tales in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed., 2nd ed., F.N. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1961), p.33.

⁵¹ Oliver Farrar Emerson, "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," Romanic Review, 13, No. 2, p. 138.

⁵² Gertrude Jobes, Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols (New York: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1961), p. 442.

⁵³ Jobes, p. 442.

⁵⁴ See Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carlisle, ed., Robert Ackerman (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1947) 11. 343-354 and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, eds., J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Garder, 2nd ed. revised by Norman Davis (Oxford: At the

Clarendon Press, 1976), 277-288. In this test both Bishop Baldwin and Sir Kay fail because though their horses have corn and hay, they thrust aside the Carle's foal that is standing alongside. When Sir Garwain goes to the stable, he finds the foal outside in the rain. He leads the animal in, puts his green mantle on it and bids it to eat, commenting that it is the foal's master, the Carle, who is paying for all that is there.

⁵⁵ John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p.210.

⁵⁶ The testing of Sir Gawain in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is discussed at length in Chapter Four of this thesis.

⁵⁷ Christopher Brookhouse, ed., The Avowing of Arthur in Sir Amadace and The Avowing of Arthur, Anglistica 15. eds. Torsten Dahl et. al. (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1968), pp. 85-88.

⁵⁸ See Edwin A. Greenlaw, "The Vows of Baldwin" in PMLA, 21, No. 3 (1906), 575-636., for a detailed discussion on the relationships between Baldwin's three vows in The Avowing of Arthur and other analogous stories from Europe and the Orient.

⁵⁹ Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., Le Morte Arthur in Arthur: A Short Sketch of His Life and History, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 88 (London: N. Trubner and Co., 1844), p. 51. In the stanzaic Le Morte Arthur Sir Agrawayne proposes to King Arthur:

"Syr, ye and All the courte by-dene
Wendythe to-morowe on huntynge Ryght,
And sythen send word to the quene
That ye wille dwelle with-oute All nyght,
. . . ."

(ll. 1752-1755)

⁶⁰ Jean Frappier, ed., La Morte le Roi Artu: Roman du XIII^e Siecle. (Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1954). In Le Mort le Roi Artu Agravain's advice is "fetes asavoir a touz vos serjanz que vos irois le matin en bois (p.111). The advice is followed: "le rois semont ses chevaliers d'aler chacier en la forest de Kamaalot a l'endemain matin." (p.113).

⁶¹ Marcelle Thiébaux, The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 89.

⁶² Publius Vergilius Maro, Aeneid in Virgil, trans., H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), pp. 400-401.

⁶³Often, those who evade their amorous pursuers suffer a fate similar to Actaeon's as they are changed into animals or humbler shapes of nature. As Thiébaux states:

. . . Their impassioned quests for wild beasts form the prelude to their becoming victims themselves. Daphne, preferring the delights of the chase to Apollo's importuning, eludes him to become transformed into a laurel tree. Picus denies the passionate Circe and she lures him to pursue a boar; hotly he presses after the quarry until he is metamorphosed into a bird. Adonis, too eager for the boar chase, spurns Venus and dies to change into a flower. Narcissus, exhausted by the chase, seeks the cool water when he evades the amorous Echo. Now, contemplating his image, he discovers a strange new passion, death and metamorphosis. Too fervid a dedication to the chaste pursuits of Diana, a renunciation of Cupid's hunting, results in the loss of human form.

(The Stag of Love, p. 96)

⁶⁴Publius Ovidius Naso, Remedia Amoris in Ovid: The Art of Love and Other Poems, trans., J.H. Mozley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 188-89.

Languor, et inmodici sub nullo vindice somni,
Aleaque, et multo tempora quassa mero
Eripunt omnes animo sine vulnere nervos:
Adfluit incautis insidiosus Amor.
Desidiam puer ille sequi solet, odit agentes:
Da vacuae menti, quo teneatur, opus.

(Remedia Amoris, ll. 145-50)

(Listlessness, and too much sleep with none to check you, and dicing, and fuddling the temples with much wine, without a wound rob the spirit of all its strength: insidious Love glides into defenceless hearts. Where sloth is, that Boy is wont to follow; he hates the busy: give the empty mind some business to occupy it.)

⁶⁵See R.R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries: From the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1954), pp. 218-19. The influence of classical authors on medieval Europe is traced by R.R. Bolgar who notes that Ovid was widely read at the time.

⁶⁶Andreas Capellanus, The Art of Love, trans., John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 27.

⁶⁷See Thiébaux's discussion of Li dis dou serf amoureux, L'amoreuse prise, and Le dit du cerf blanc in The Stag of Love, pp. 145-66.

⁶⁸Thiébaux, p. 115.

⁶⁹Thiébaux, pp. 116-17.

⁷⁰Geoffrey Chaucer, The Book of the Duchess in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed., 2nd ed., F.N. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1961), p. 270.

⁷¹George Lyman Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946), pp. 68-69.

⁷²Donald C. Baker, "Imagery in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," Studia Neophilologica 30 (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1958), 20.

⁷³Bernard F. Huppé and D.W. Robertson, Jr., Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 49.

⁷⁴An animal was said to be "embosed" when it was tired, exhausted and unable to evade the hunters any longer. At this juncture the animal would have bosses of foam at its mouth. A discussion of the use of this term, not only by Chaucer but by Milton in Samson Agonistes (1700) and other works is found in Oliver Farrar Emerson's article "Chaucer and Medieval Hunting," pp. 117-21.

⁷⁵Baker, p. 20.

⁷⁶Beryl Rowland, "The Whelp in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 66 (1965), 154-55.

⁷⁷Wm. and F. Baillie Grohman, eds., The Master of Game by Edward, Second Duke of York: The Oldest English Book on Hunting (London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), p. 166.

⁷⁸R.A. Waldron, "The Prologue to The Parlement of the Thre Ages," Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, 73 (1972), 786. Waldron points out that Isreal Gollancz titled his edition of the poem as "An Alliterative Poem on the Nine Worthies and the Heroes of Romance" and that the majority of the explanatory notes in the edition are on material that comes after line 300 of the poem. It is at line 300 that Elde starts to recite the lives of the Nine Worthies.

⁷⁹Russell A. Peck, "The Careful Hunter in The Parlement of the Thre Ages," ELH, 39, No. 3 (1972), p. 334.

⁸⁰Speirs, pp. 291-92.

⁸¹M.Y. Offord, ed., The Parlement of the Thre Ages, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 246 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 2.

⁸²Speirs, p. 292. "Most likely the slaying of the deer was the way to secure a vision or dream-guidance." Speirs' remark recalls other occurrences where a deer's death seems to signal contact with the Other World. Arthur's killing of the deer in The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell and in Malory's tale of "Arthur and Accolon" are cases in point.

⁸³In a companion poem, Winner and Waster, members of the nobility are seen as wasters who spend their lives in reckless pursuits rather than in husbandry.

⁸⁴That the hunter should be heavy from a lack of sleep is interesting, as it would seem that the hunt takes place in the early morning. The hunter has gone into the woods the night before and not as Waldron states when "it is just getting light" (Waldron, p. 794). The fact that he slept overnight on "a banke be a bryme syde" (l. 7) allows him to see the orderly change of animals when "the derke was done." (l. 16)

⁸⁵Peck, p. 337.

⁸⁶Bruce, p. 33.

⁸⁷Thiébaux, "The Medieval Chase," p. 273.

⁸⁸Offord, p. 41. Offord notes that the raven's bone ". . . was a small piece of gristle at the end of the sternum which was thrown up into a tree to crows or ravens, as a kind of luck offering."

⁸⁹Rachel Hands, English Hawking and Hunting in The Boke of St. Albans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 177-78.

⁹⁰McNeill, p. 110.

⁹¹Phillipa Tristram, Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature (London: Paul Elek, 1976), p. 86.

⁹²Ralph Hanna III, ed., The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), pp. 64-65.

⁹³ Ralph Hanna III, "The Awntyrs off Arthure: An Interpretation," Modern Language Quarterly (1970), 283-84.

CHAPTER THREE

¹See Appendix C to this thesis for a full account of Queen Ratio's moralization on the boar.

²Wm. and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., The Master of Game by Edward, Second Duke of York: The Oldest English Book on Hunting (London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), p. 46.

³See Ernst Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages. Trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 184, for a discussion on the appearance of lions and leopards in medieval landscapes.

⁴Henry Frowde, ed., Turbeville's Booke of Hunting: 1576 (London: The Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 149.

⁵Gunnar Brusewitz, Hunting (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), p. 139. Brusewitz writes of this custom: "This fashion appears to have been most common during the Middle Ages but held its ground until well into the eighteenth century, above all in Spain. It can scarcely have been comfortable for the hounds to run in the heavy coats, and it was probably only the most highly-prized animals that wore them."

⁶Walter W. Skeat, ed., The Romance of Partenay or of Lusignen, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 22 (London: N. Trubner and Co., 1896), p. 12.

⁷Skeat, p.234. There are different versions of this encounter. According to Skeat, the "translator has here made several mistakes, and considerably injured the story. He makes the earl die by the boar's tusks, and so all Raymond's subsequent self-reproaches are out of place. The French version is that Raymond's sword glances off the boar's back and cuts Amery's body open. . . . The German version is much better. According to this Amery aims at the boar with his spear as it is rushing at him, and slightly wounds it, but is himself thrown down. Raymond, coming to the rescue, seizes the earl's spear, and thrusts at the boar; but the spear, glancing aside, pierces the earl's body. . . .

Perhaps, however, the English prose romance tells the story best of all, viz. as follows.

"(I)N this part Recounteth thystory that whan Raymondyn cam ayenst the said bore for to kepe hym that he should not hurte his lord, the boore anoone hurted to hym and ranne fast toward the Erle, whiche

see yng the wyld bore comme, lefte his swerd and toke a short spere and strayght held it downward before hym. And the Erle that knew and wyst moche of the chasse broched the bore thrughe the brest, but the Erle felle doun on his knees. And thanne Raymondyn holdyng his swerd in his hand came toward the bore, and wold haue smytte hym betwene the foure legges, For he leye vpsodoun, the bely vpward; and suche a stroke gaaf Raymondyn to the bore that the blade of hys swerde brake so that the poynte of it sprang ayenst the Erlis stomak and wounded hym sore in so muche that he deyed therof."

In these variant versions, the boar is even more the instrument of death in an unexpected and accidental fashion.

⁸Christopher Brookhouse, ed., The Avowing of Arthur in Sir Amadace and The Avowing of Arthur, *Anglistica* 15, eds., Torsten Dahl et. al. (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bogger, 1968), p. 61 and p. 66.

⁹Frances E. Richardson, ed., Sir Eglamour of Artois, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 256 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 29.

¹⁰Eugen Kölbing, ed., The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun, Early English Text Society, Extra Series No. 5 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1894), p. 38.

¹¹L.F. Casson, ed., The Romance of Sir Degrevant, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 221 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 85.

¹²Special mention of this part of the boar is also made in The Master of Game: "They have a hard skin and strong flesh, especially upon their shoulders which is called the shield." p. 49.

¹³In the Lincoln Cathedral Library 91. manuscript, edited by Richardson in parallel text form with the B.M. Cotton Caligula A II manuscript, the tusks are "halfe a 3erde longe" (p. 26), and Kölbing, in his notes to Sir Beues of Hamtoun, quotes an unidentified version of the poem in which the tusks are "passen a fote longe." (p. 253)

¹⁴Sir James George Frazer, The New Golden Bough, ed., Theodor H. Gaster (New York: Criterion Books, 1959), p. 453. According to Frazer, the association of the pig with gods resulted in an ambivalent attitude in which ". . . the animal was looked on, not simply as a filthy and disgusting creature, but as being endowed with high supernatural powers, and that as such it was regarded with that primitive sentiment of religious awe and fear in which feelings of reverence and abhorrence are almost equally blended. Now when a being is thus the object of mixed and implicitly contradictory feelings, he may be said to occupy a position of unstable equilibrium. In course of time one of the contradictory feelings is likely to prevail over the

other, and according as the feeling which finally predominates is that of reverence or abhorrence, the being who is the object of it will rise into a god or sink into a devil. The latter, on the whole, was the fate of the pig in Egypt." This attitude was to influence the thinking in Mediterranean lands for ages to come, and eventually to overcome, via Christianity, the northern European viewpoint in which the animal had risen "into a god."

¹⁵ See Curtius, p. 48, concerning medieval knowledge of Ovid's works. In the section "Curriculum Authors," Curtius shows that Ovid was well known by medieval authorities and studied in some medieval schools.

¹⁶ Publius Ovidius Naso, Metamorphoses Book X, trans., Frank Justus Miller (London: William Heineman, 1929), pp. 102-103.

¹⁷ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans. and eds., The Mabinogion (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1970), p. 135.

¹⁸ See Idris Llewelyn Foster, "Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream" in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed., Richard Sherman Loomis (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 31-43. The obtaining of the comb, razor and shears appears to be part of a Celtic tradition indicating a personal relationship. p. 33.

¹⁹ Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales (London: Thomas and Hudson, 1961), pp. 70-71.

²⁰ The story of Diarmid is cited in Celtic Heritage (p. 231). "It was fatal for Diarmid to hunt swine, because of a prohibition laid upon him as a boy. It happened this way. Finn's dogs fell to fighting and Diarmid's foster-brother, seeking refuge between the knees of Diarmid's father was squeezed to death. The dead boy's father transformed the corpse into a grey cropped pig and pronounced an incantation over him giving him the same life-span as Diarmid."

²¹ Anne Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). See Chapter VII, "Divine Animal." pp. 308-21.

²² Ross, p. 321.

²³ Acton Griscom, ed., and Robert Ellis Jones, trans., The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth (Longmans, Green and Co., 1929), p. 385.

²⁴ Lewis Thorpe, trans., Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966), pp. 171-72.

²⁵Thomas Hearne, ed., Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle 1. (Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1724), pp. 132-33.

²⁶J. Rawson Lumby, ed., Bernardus de Cura rei famularis with some Early Scottish Prophecies, Early English Text Society, Extra-Series, No. 42 (London: Trubner and Co., 1870), p. 24.

²⁷C.L. Wrenn, ed., Beowulf (London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 103. The modern English translation is taken from the commentary on the poem and is to be found on page 191.

²⁸A.T. Hatto, "Snake-swords and Boar-helms in Beowulf," English Studies 38 (1957), p. 155.

²⁹Heinrich Beck, Das Ebersignum im Germanischen: Ein Beitrag zur Germanischen Tier Symbolik (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1965), pp. 4-53. In the first chapter of this work, "Der Eber und der Aspekt des Kriegerischen," Beck discusses the ubiquitous appearance of the boar on artifacts and weapons of the Germanic peoples.

³⁰Ivor Arnold, ed., Le Roman de Brut de Wace I (Paris: Societe des Anciens Textes Français, 1934), p. 56.

³¹G.L. Brook and R.F. Leslie, eds., Layamon: Brut I, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 250 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 45.

³²Brook and Leslie, p. 30.

³³Sir Frederick Madden, ed., Layamon's Brut I (Osnabruck: Otto Zeller, 1967), p. xxiii.

³⁴Thomas Oswald Cockayne, Leechdoms, Wortcuning and Starcraft of Early England (London: The Holland Press, 1961), p. 359.

³⁵Henry Weber, ed., Richard Coer de Lion in Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1810), pp. 119-20.

³⁶Pork usually means the flesh of a pig and in Richard Coer de Lion Richard's courtiers try to buy some, evidently in a marketplace. In Beues of Hamtoun Sir Guy's wife mentions a desire for flesh of a "wilde bor" -- a desire that forces him to go into an ambush.

³⁷Kölbing, p. 9.

³⁸In both these examples of longing after pork and boar's flesh there is an interplay of Germanic and Christian traditions which will be explored later in this chapter.

³⁹Edward Piper, ed., Clariodus: a metrical romance (1830: rpt. New York: AMS Press Inc., 1973), p. 65.

⁴⁰P.F. Hissiger, ed., Le Morte Arthur (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 57.

⁴¹M. Mills, ed., Lybeaus Desconus, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 261 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 155.

⁴²Sidney J. Herrtage, ed., Sir Ferumbras, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 34 (London: Trübner and Co., 1879), p. 22. In notes to these lines Herrtage comments that fighting 'brymly as a bor' was a common simile in early poetry. Also in the ensuing fight between Oliver and Sir Ferumbras both are described as foaming at the mouth like wild boars: 'at pe fom of hure moup out spronge: so do out of pe bore.' (l. 699)

⁴³Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales in The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed., 2nd ed., F.N. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1961), p. 33.

⁴⁴Robinson, p. 675.

⁴⁵Skeat, The Romance of Partenay, p. 77.

⁴⁶There may have been a distinction in the poet's mind between the boar of the first simile and the swine in the second pejorative simile. One notes, however, that in Beues of Hamtoun both words are used to describe the same animal. Also, we notice that boars and swine are associated with sin and Satan in Christian thought.

⁴⁷2 Peter 2:22 "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." and Proverbs 11:22 (See page 31) The swine is spoken of with horror in the Bible where it is seen as the worst of all unclean beasts. Its flesh was forbidden as food in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Leviticus 11:7-8 reads: 'And the swine though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.'

⁴⁸Halldor Hermannsson, ed., The Icelandic Physiologus (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1938), p. 21.

⁴⁹My own translation, checked by Dr. Richard D'Alquen (Germanic Languages, University of Alberta).

⁵⁰T.H. White, ed., The Book of Beasts: being a translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), p. 76.

⁵¹Beryl Rowland, Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1973), p. 40. Beryl Rowland refers here to the procession of the Seven Deadly Sins in John Gower's chief French work, Mirour de l'omme.

⁵²Brusewitz, Hunting, p. 138.

⁵³James Morton, ed., The Ancrene Riwe (London: The Camden Society, 1853), pp. 198-99.

⁵⁴Animals with Human Faces, p. 37. Beryl Rowland cites two examples of swine apparently having murdered humans from as late as the last century. ". . . in 1820 Leigh Hunt, the poet, in his short-lived newspaper The Examiner, reported an inquest on an eighteen-month-old girl who was partially eaten by a pig in a field in the little Devonshire village of Newton St. Cyres. A pig actually stood trial for murder as late as 1864 in Yugoslavia."

⁵⁵Cited by Beryl Rowland in Animals with Human Faces, p. 38.

⁵⁶F.J. Furnivall, ed., The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man, Englisht by John Lydgate, A.D. 1426 from the French of Guillaume de Deguileville, A.D. 1335, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 77 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1899), p. 354.

⁵⁷Walter Clyde Curry, Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1926). For a full account of Chaucer's portrayal of the miller see pages 79-90.

⁵⁸Henry B. Wheatley, ed., Merlin or The Early History of King Arthur: A Prose Romance, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 21 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1899), pp. 421-22.

⁵⁹Animals with Human Faces, p.41 Beryl Rowland cites an extremely vicious, but popular, anti-semitic joke that showed Jews being suckled by a sow.

⁶⁰Thomas Wright, ed., The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II, The Camden Society No. 6 (London: John Bowyer Nichols, 1839), p. 151.

⁶¹Cited by G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), pp. 325-26.

⁶²Beryl Rowland, Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World (Kent State University Press, 1971), p. 78. Miss Rowland notes that the sculpture in Devon is not an isolated example, citing similar hunts on Norman doorways elsewhere in Britain.

⁶³ According to Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hale, editors of Middle English Metrical Romances, this Saint Margaret is a Scottish saint of that name who died in 1093. p. 615.

⁶⁴ French and Hale state that "the strong odor of the boar is especially mentioned in The Master of Game." I have not been able to find any reference to this in the work. They might be referring to the statement on the boar which says: "And therefore have I said they wind wonderfully far and marvellously well." (Master of Game, p. 48) The meaning of these words is that the animal has an excellent sense of smell and not that it has a strong smell itself.

⁶⁵ A. Trampe Bödtker, ed., The Middle English Versions of Partonope of Blois, Early English Text Society, Extra Series No. 109 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Ltd., 1912), p. 15.

⁶⁶ A.T. Hatto, "Poetry and the Hunt in Medieval Germany," AUMLA Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association, No. 25 (1966), p. 38.

⁶⁷ Karl Brunner, ed., The Seven Sages of Rome (Southern Version), Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 191 (London: Henry Milford, Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 199.

⁶⁸ Julius Zupitza, ed., The Romance of Guy of Warwick, Early English Text Society, Extra Series Nos. 42, 49, 50. (London: N. Trubner and Co., 1887), p. 360.

⁶⁹ Beck, pp. 170-171.

⁷⁰ Eugene Vinaver, ed., The Works of Sir Thomas Malory, Vol. 2. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 821.

⁷¹ Richard Leighton Greene, ed., The Early English Carols (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 80-81.

⁷² Jean Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 16.

⁷³ John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 84.

⁷⁴ Greene, The Early English Carols, p. 81.

⁷⁵ Walter W. Skeat, ed., William of Palerne, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 5. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1898), p. 10. In this romance, the Emperor of Rome chases a wild boar, gets lost, then he sees a werewolf chasing a hart. He chases them, loses them, but comes across William.

In this case the boar is the first of two (or maybe three?) guide animals.

CHAPTER FOUR

¹Henry Lyttleton Savage, The Gawain Poet: Studies in His Personality and Background (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), p. 31.

²Savage, p. 48.

³The Master of Game, pp. 30-31. Savage quotes a pertinent passage from The Master of Game to illustrate this point. "An old deer is wonder wise and felle (cunning) for to save his life, and to keep his advantage when he is hunted and is uncoupled to as the lymer moveth him or other hounds findeth him without lymers. . . . And he will abide still, and if he be alone and the hounds find him, he shall go about his haunt wilily and wisely and seek the change of other deer, for to make the hounds envoise (go off scent), and to look where he may abide.

⁴J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, eds., Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, 2nd ed. Revised by Norman Davis. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 33. All quotations from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight in this chapter are taken from this edition of the text.

⁵Louis Blenkner, O.S.B., "The Three Hunts and Sir Gawain's Triple Fault," American Benedictine Review, XXIX (1978), 238.

⁶That Gawain does not make the sign of the cross is appropriate, perhaps, in view of the Christian significance of the boar as the Anti-Christ. However, the boar that is hunted in the field, as is shown later in this chapter, is not a demonic animal.

⁷Savage, p. 44.

⁸Savage, p. 37.

⁹John Speirs, Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 42.

¹⁰A.C. Spearing, The Gawain Poet: A Critical Study (Cambridge: The University Press, 1970), p. 217.

¹¹Sacvan Bercovitch, "Romance and Anti-Romance in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Critical Studies of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, eds., Donald R. Howard and Christian Zacher (Notre Dame, Ind.:

The University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 261.

¹²This aspect of the hunts is also mentioned by Henry Lyttleton Savage in his article "Hunting in the Middle Ages" in Speculum 8, No. 1 (1933), p. 37.

¹³Spearing, The Gawain Poet, p. 10. This same claim for the aristocratic lineage of an author on the grounds of familiarity with hunting procedure and terminology is also made for the anonymous author of The Parlement of the Thre Ages. One wonders, however, if hunting terminology and procedure could not have been learnt by one who was a frequent witness to the activity and who had an interest in language and etiquette, but who was not necessarily of noble lineage.

¹⁴W.R.J. Barron, "French romance and the structure of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Studies in Medieval literature and languages in memory of Frederick Whitehead (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), p. 15.

¹⁵Cited by G.R. Owst, Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961), p. 82.

¹⁶Wm. and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., The Master of Game by Edward Second Duke of York: The Oldest English Book on Hunting (London: Chatto and Windus, 1909), pp. 4-5.

¹⁷Criticism and Medieval Poetry (London: Edward Arnold, 1972), p. 38. The problem of courtesy in the poem has drawn much critical attention. It is a problem best summed up by A.C. Spearing, who states: "Now cortayse was a leading ideal among the aristocratic classes of Medieval Europe. It is an extremely rich and fluid concept, and for that reason it is difficult to define."

¹⁸George Lyman Kittredge, A Study of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Harvard 1916; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1960), p. 114.

¹⁹Tolkien and Gordon, p. 74.

²⁰Marcelle Thiébaux, The Stag of Love (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 75.

²¹Larry D. Benson, Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1965), p. 108.

²²Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales in The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed., F.N. Robinson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1961), p. 260. One notes, once again, the connection made between the sins of lust and sloth.

²³The host's insistence that Gawain lead a life of rest and ease recalls the description of Arthur at the beginning of the poem where we are told that he does not "Auper to longe lye or to longe sitte,/ So bisied him his zonge blod and his brayn wylde." (ll. 88-89.)

²⁴D.H. Green in "Pathway to Adventure," Viatar: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 8 (1977) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 145-88. D.H. Green discusses the transition of the medieval hero from the realm of geographical reality to that of chivalric adventure. In discussing Gahmuret's journey in Parzival, Green states: "All these place names [Baghdad, Nineveh, Babylon, Morocco, Persia, Damascus, Aleppo, Arabia] designate real geographical localities, known to the twelfth century from the Crusades. Yet Gahmuret's adventures only really begin once he encounters Belakane . . . it is only at this stage that Gahmuret's journey passes almost imperceptibly from the world of reality into the ideal realm of adventure, for the places which are only now mentioned . . . are unreal ones, chosen for their fabulous evocativeness and not meant, like the earlier names, to be equated with any physical locality. They belong to the realm of adventure and indicate that the hero has now penetrated to this new realm." (p. 154) The same imperceptible transition obtains in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight as Gawain journeys to Hautdesert, a castle with an evocative name, not to be identified with any geographical locality.

²⁵Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 149.

²⁶Pearsall and Salter, p. 148.

²⁷See The Master of Game, p. 255.

²⁸See The Master of Game, p. 255. The open season on the Red Deer Hinds ran between mid-September and early February.

²⁹Ralph Hanna, ed., The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 99. According to Hanna: "This hunting term [fermyson] refers to the close season, when the male deer is prohibited. In the M.E. hunting treatises it usually extends from early autumn (Holy Rood Day, 14 September) until late spring or early summer (generally St. John's Day, 24 June)." See footnote 97 of Chapter Two.

³⁰Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, p. 18.

³¹See Chapter II, p. 47.

³²Bibliothèque Nationale MS Français 616. fol. 70. Facsimile edition of Phebus de foys le livre de la chasse (Graz: Akademische Druck-u-Verlagsanstalt, 1976).

³³Cited by Brander in Hunting and Shooting, p. 45.

³⁴Benson, p. 56.

³⁵Boars are among the monsters that Gawain battles on the way to the castle (l. 722). He is, however, a Christian knight.

³⁶J.D. Burnley, "Hunting Scenes in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in The Yearbook of English Studies 3, eds. T.J.B. Spencer and R.L. Smallwood (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1973), 7.

³⁷J.D. Burnley, p. 7.

³⁸J.D. Burnley, pp. 7-8.

³⁹John Finlayson, ed. Morte Arthure (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 49.

⁴⁰See Tolkien and Gordon, pp. 116-17. In a note to line 1593 (Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot euen) Tolkien and Gordon compare this slaying of a boar with that which occurs in Avowyng of Arther. "For the killing of a wild boar with a sword cf. Arthur in Avowyng of Arther xvi, after his spear is broken; he thrusts his sword in at the neck just as the lord does. In Master of Game Baillie-Grohman (p. xlvii) illustrates swords with broad point, of c. 1500, for boar hunting. He quotes Gaston Phoebus as saying that to kill a boar with the sword when the animal was not 'held' by hounds was 'a fairer thing and more noble' than to kill him with the spear."

⁴¹Christopher Brookhouse, ed., The Avowing of Arthur in Sir Amadace and The Avowing of Arthur, Anglistica 15, eds., Torsten Dahl et. al. (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1968), 68.

⁴²J.A. Burrow, "The Third Fitt" in Twentieth Century Interpretations of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, ed., Denton Fox (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), p. 36.

⁴³G.L. Brook and R.F. Leslie, eds. Lazamon: Brut II, Early English Text Society, Original Series No. 250 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 543.

⁴⁴Sidney J. Herrtage, ed., Sir Ferumbras, Early English Text Society, Extra Series No. 34 (London: Trübner and Co., 1894), p. 74.

⁴⁵Beryl Rowland, Animals With Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1973), p. 76.

⁴⁶Kenneth Varty, Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1967), p. 21.

⁴⁷Kenneth Varty cites the following account of a funeral service for Reynard. Reynard the Fox, p. 85. "Reynard's body was carried to the great hall of the palace and there the animals took part in the service for the Dead. No sooner was this over than the animals, forgetting all about Reynard, renewed their feasting and rejoicing which went on through the night.

At daybreak, Bernard the Ass, who was archbishop, ordered the bells to be tolled. Then the animals carried Reynard to the church and they laid him on his bier before the altar. Bernard, pale-faced with much fasting, gravely pronounced a funeral oration. This was followed by a special prayer for Reynard, recalling his goodness, proved by all risks he ran to satisfy his wife's, children's and his own great appetite. Brichemer the Stag then read the epistle and absolved Reynard of his sins. Ferrant the Horse read the Gospel according to Reynard, and Bernard then said mass. After this, Brun the Bear began to dig Reynard's grave while Noble drew up the funeral procession. Chantecler the Cock was to head this, carrying the censer. Brichemer the Stag and Belin the Ram were to carry the bier. Isengrin was to carry the cross, the goat was to beat the drum and the horse play the harp. Tibert the Cat, Couard the Hare and Hubert the Kite were to carry candles alongside the bier. The mice were to ring the bells and the ape was to weep as the body was laid to rest. Reynard, with head uncovered, was carried towards his grave.

Just as Brun began to shovel earth on to him, Reynard recovered from his long faint, opened his eyes and looked about him. He quickly weighed up the situation, jumped up out of his grave, seized Chantecler by the neck and made off as fast as he could."

⁴⁸D.W. Robertson, A Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 251.

⁴⁹Stephen Manning, "A Psychological Interpretation of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Critical Studies of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, eds., Donald R. Howard and Christian Zacher (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 285.

⁵⁰Burrow, pp. 59-60.

⁵¹Dorothy Everett, "The Alliterative Revival" in Essays of Middle English Literature (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 82.

⁵²Laura Hibbard Loomis, "Gawain and the Green Knight" in Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, ed., Richard Sherman Loomis (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 531-32.

⁵³Cited by Laura Hibbard Loomis in "Gawain and the Green Knight," p. 531.

⁵⁴Charles Moorman, "Myth and Medieval Literature: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" in Sir Gawain and Pearl: Critical Essays, ed., Robert J. Blanch (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 216.

⁵⁵M.Y. Offord, ed., The Parlement of the Thre Ages, Early English Text Society, Original Series, No. 246 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 2.

⁵⁶Ralph Hanna, ed., The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn, p. 65.

⁵⁷Bror Danielssen, ed., William Twiti: The Art of Hunting, 1327 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1977), p. 21.

⁵⁸Brookhouse, p. 63.

⁵⁹See The Master of Game, p. 239.

⁶⁰G.V. Smithers, "What G.G.K. is About," Medium Aevum, 32 (1963), 188-89.

⁶¹See Lucy Allen Paton, Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960), pp. 228-54. In Chapter XIV of this book, entitled "La Damoiselle Cacheresse" Dr. Paton shows the relationship between Morgan and Diana, the Greek goddess of the hunt.

⁶²Kenneth Varty, Reynard the Fox, p. 23. Varty states: "To judge by extant literary evidence, the fox seems to have had considerable difficulty in navigating the English Channel. He first succeeded, so it seems, about 1250, to lure the wolf into a well in a short poem called Of the Vox and of the Wolf. In this he is usually called only the fox, but he does, at one stage in the action, admit that his name is Reynard. The Wolf is Sigrim. . . . Reynard then goes into exile or hiding for more than a century when he reappears with the title and name of Daun Russell in Chaucer's Nonne Preestes Tale of about 1390, an original version of Pierre de Saint Cloud's poem. After another long absence from the literary public, Reynard makes a triumphant return with William Caxton's History of Reynard the Fox in 1418, reprinted in 1489. This is a translation from the Dutch, in fact from a Dutch edition printed in Gouda in 1479."

⁶³Varty states of Reynard the Fox, p. 102, "The chief object of this book is to prove, from iconographical evidence, that Reynard was much better known in England than extant literary evidence suggests." (p. 24) To support his argument Varty cites examples of church sculptures showing some part of the Reynard cycle from as far apart as Bristol Cathedral (p. 11), Tilton-on-the-Hill in Leicestershire (pls. 53-55), and Chester Cathedral (p. 166).

Varty also remarks: ". . . one is struck by the paucity of foxes in Wales and the extreme north and the relatively large numbers in parts of Yorkshire and East Anglia. Clearly, religious zealots took a heavy toll at the Reformation in some areas, while accidents, wars and thoughtless restorers also further reduced the numbers of Reynard's tribe. Areas less given to fanaticism, far from the tide of battle and too poor to afford restoration have provided the safest retreats for the fox and the happiest hunting grounds"

⁶⁴Varty, p. 26.

⁶⁵Kenneth Varty, Reynard the Fox, p. 91. "Before going any further, it is only fair to point out, after stressing the fantastic nature of the Bestiary descriptions, that what Physiologus says about the fox simulating death to capture unwary birds is true and based on observation. This was proved in 1961 by the Russian naturalist F. Rossif who, with the help of the Moscow Pavlov Institute, filmed a fox in the Caucasus as it feigned death and thereby caught a carrion crow."

⁶⁶Varty, p. 51.

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APPENDICES

Appendix ALes Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio Volume 1.

Section 28: Ci devise comment et par quelle maniere l'en deffait
le cerf; et y a grant maniere.

L'aprentis demande comment l'en deffait le cerf.

Modus respont: Quant tu defferas le cerf, oste premierement la langue toute entiere et boute ton coutel parmi le gosier, qui tient a la langue, et fai une fente et boute ou fourchié, de quoy nous t'avon parlé yci devant, puis oste les antoires, que aucuns apellent les neus du cerf. Les antoires sont une haute char qui est ou costé du col et joint aus espauls. Enchise a travers celle char joingnant de l'espaule, et fai un pertuis en ycelle a bouter ton doi, si la soulieve de ton doi et coupe au lonc du col celle char environ plain pié de lonc, et fai un pertuis et met ou fourchié; et aussi feras tu de l'autre part.

Puis pren le pié devant destre du cerf et enchisie tout a travers du costé du cerf, au lonc de l'espaule par devers le costé, et oste l'espaule; et ainsi osteras tu l'espaule de l'autre part. Puis oste la surgorge, c'est une char qui est depuis le bout de la hampe par desur la gorge. Enchise dont par le bout de la hampe, tout a travers le col jusques au jargel, et garde que tu ne le coupes, et coupe celle char au lonc du jargel, se que le jargel demeure tout decouvert, et en coupe environ plain pié et fay une fente et met ou fourchié. Le jargel est apelé gossier de ceulz qui ne sont mie veneurs. Aprés met ton coutel ou jargel, environ demi pié de la

hampe, et le fent un poi au lonc, puis pren l'érbiere, qui joint au jargel, qui est aussi comme un bouel de char, et le fent un poi au lonc aussi comme le jargel et la coupe assés pres du bout de la fente, par devers la teste du cerf, et la boute parmi la fente un tour ou deux, affin que la viande qui est en l'érbiere n'isse parmi la fente; puis coupe le jargel en l'endroit ou tu as coupé l'erbriere. Puis boute le coutel au lonc du jargel et de l'erbriere dedenz la hampe, en tenant a tes dois le jargel et l'erbriere, et enchise tout entour le jargel et l'erbriere sans les couper pour les descharner, puis les lesse aler.

Item, y te couvient lever la hampe: met ton coutel plain pous sur le bout de la hampe, par devers le col, et enchise la hampe, en venant vers le ventre, et la fai estroite tant comme les costés contiennent, en eslargissent sur le ventre droit a la cuisse, en coupant au res de la cuisse jusques au dessous du penillier, qui est dite la veitte du cerf; et ne la coupe mie, ains la descharne au coutel et la rebrache, car elle sera ostee avecques les nonbles. Et quant tu aras coupé le char du ventre tout entour, si la reverse sur la hampe, puis tire a toy la panche et la bouelle, et l'erbriere s'en vendra avecques la panche. Puis oste une coiffe de gresse qui est apellee foullié, et l'oste avecques l'autre gresse que tu trouveras es bouiaux, si les melle et assemble tout ensemble. Et quant ce sera osté, coupe une toie de char qui est tout a travers le corps soulz le cuer au reis des costés, et tire a toy le cuer et les entrailles, et ovecques ce s'en vendra le gargel. Puis coupe la hampe et ses costes tout d'un costé et la reverse de l'autre part,

si se brisera par les jointes qui sont en costé. Et ce te moustrera, comme tu la leveras, une autre fois, quar elle se doit lever par les jointes.

Or te faut lever le collier, c'est une char qui est demouree entre la hampe et les espauls et vient tout entour par desus l'os du bout de la hampe suz le jargel; et ce metra[s] tu en fourchié. Or te faut lever les nombles, c'est une char et une gresse avec les regnons qui est par dedens endroit les longnes. Pren les deux cuisses et les euvre; esrase et coupe par dedens un poy des cuisses d'un costé et d'autre, et tourne ton coustel tout entour par dessous la cuisse, et va coupant tout au lonc par dessous les loingnes, si que les os de l'eschine demeurent tous descouvers par dedens; et oste le sanc que il ne te nuise, et garde que il chiee dessus le cuir.

Or te faut lever les cuisses: pren les deulz jambes de derriere et les croise l'une suz l'autre, puis les foulle contre terre, puis coupe et descharne la char des costés qui tient a[s] cuisses, si comme les cuisses se comportent, et coupe tout jusques a l'eschine d'un costé et d'autre, et fent a ton coutel la jointe de l'eschine qui est endroit ta coupe, et coupe tout a travers, eschine et tout. Or te faut lever le col d'avesques les costés: coupe le col tout entour, reis a reis des espauls, par le bout de la hampe, et fai tenir a un homme les costés et tourne le col a forche, si rompa d'avesques les costés.

Or te faut lever l'eschine: met les costés sus le bout et enchise de ton coutel tout au lonc de l'eschine, d'un costé et d'autre, et la fai si estrainte que il n'i ait que les neus de l'eschine

entre deulz fantes, puis coupe parmi ta fente os et tout, de un costé et d'autre, tout au lonc, et que les costes s'entretiennent a l'os du bout de la hampe quant l'eschine en sera hors. Or te faut lever la queue: met les cuisses du cerf contre terre jointes l'une a l'autre, si que la queue du cerf soit contremont, puis aforche les deulz jambes du cerf par devers la queue et met ton coutel au bout de la cuisse et enchise, en venant droit a toy et en prenant sus les cuisses, en venant par dessouz le cul; et fai d'un costé comme d'autre. Et se il a bonne veneson, si la coupe plus large et la fai espesse de char souz la gresse, et lesse un poi de l'os corbin avec, si sera plus ferme. Or te faut lever les cuisses d'avesques l'os corbin, si est l'os ou la vessie est. Met donques les cuisses contre terre, d'icelle partie dont tu ostas la queue, et reverse bien les cuisses, et tu verras deulz grosses jointes de l'une partie et de l'autre de l'os corbin; si coupe sus les jointes et les reverse et boute ton coutel parmi, et coupe d'un costé et d'autre, tout au lonc de l'os corbin, le plus pres des os que tu pourras.

Or te faut oster la teste du cerf d'avesques le col: coupe le col bien pres des joes de la teste tout entour, et tu trouveras une jointe, si boute ton coutel parmi et coupe les ners derriere; si fai bien tenir l'un et l'autre, et puis soit la teste teurse, si s'en vendra. Puis pren la teste du cerf et la mait a part pour fere le droit a ton limier, si comme il te sera divise ci après.

Appendix B

Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio Volume 1.

Section 63: Ci moralisse la roine Ratio des bestes, especialment du cerf.

L'aprentis demande: "Quelles sont les essamples que vous nous deistes u commencement des chapistres du leu et du cerf?"

A che respont la royne Ratio et dist que Dieu Nostres Seigneur donna mont de belles propriétés aus bestes mues, en quoi homme peut prendre mout de belles exemples, et par especial il donna a cerf mont de propriétés, qui sont figures et essamples au gouvernement de nostre vie selon nostre loy, si comme il vous sera devisé. Premièrement il demonstre, es propriétés que Dieu li donna, la nativité Nostre Seigneur, après il demoustre sa mort, après il demoustre les dis commandements de la loy, apres il demonstre comment l'en doit fuir a ses aversaires, après il demonstre quix aversaires il a, après il demonstre espurgatoire et la vie pardurable; si vous deviserons comment les figures dessus dites peuent estre desclairez.

"Quant a demoustrer en figure la naitivité Nostre Seigneur, il est ainsi que, quant Adam out gousté du fruit devée, tout nature fu desordenee tellement que touz cheux qui mouroient aloient en enfer, et pour ce meffait devint nature, d'omme si couarde et en si grant freeur que rien ne le pouait aseuer. Quant Dieu de sa grace vout entrer en ventre de la benoite Vierge Marie, adonc fu nature confortee et asseuree. Tout ainsi demoustre u cerf, quer, quant Dieu crea cerf, il le fist de si tres couarde nature, ainssi comme

Ysidore le recorde en son livre, que il mourist devant les chiens, se en fust un osset que il mist en son cuer, qui li soustient la vertu esperituel et li donne forche et hardement. Et chel osset demonstre comment Dieu conforta nature d'omme quant il entra u cuer de la Vierge Marie.

A demoustrer la mort Nostre Seigneur: elle fu bien demoustree quant Saint Eustace le vit crucifié entre ses cornes.

A demoustrer comme les dis commadements de la loi y sont comprins: homme doit bien savoir quix sont les dix commende[me]ns, que Dieu commanda a homme expressement de les garder et que il les meist en sa teste pour le garant de sa vie pardurable et pour la deffiance de tous ses aversaires. Ainsi est il demoustré u cerf, quer le cerf a dis braches en ses cornes, ne plus selon le mestier de venerie ne li en peust on donner, si comme il est dist en cest livre, et ches dis branches li donna Dieu et mist en la teste pour le garant de sa vie et pour soi deffendre de tous ses aversaires; et ainsi ches dis branches demoustrent les dis commendemens de la loi.

A demoustrer comment l'en doit fuir a ses aversaires; j'ai ailleurs fait desclaracion en cest livre comme cerf fuist quant il est chassié; il fuit les voiez dures et seches, affin que les chiens qui le[s] chassent ne puissent assentir, et puis va a l'iaue pour soi baigner, affin que il perdent l'asentir de lui. Ainsi doit fuir homme quant le deable le chasse, c'est quant il le tante; il doit aler les dures voies, il doit faire penitance et courre a l'iaue, c'est a l'iaue benoite, affin que le diable ne sante et connoise sa trache.

Aprés vous diron quix aversaires le cerf a: ses aversaires sont le diable, la char, le monde, et tiex aversaires a homme;

si vous desclaire[r] on comment les anemis du cerf sont figurés. Les deables aus cerfs sont les leus, qui les chassent nuit et jour pour les prandre et devourer. La char est la grant convoitise d'aler aus biches, pour quoi il avient que, pour la grant excession d'i excersser les biches pour la volenté de la char, il devient si pamé et si nonpuissant que le leu le prent et devoure. Le monde, c'est un des grans anemis que cerf ait, quer les gens du monde qui le chassent pour couvoitise de la char et pour le deduit. Ainssi le diable, la char, le monde sont ennemis du cerf, et aussi sont a homme ennemis, quer le diable met tous jours paine de decevoir homme. Et aussi les couvoitises, les richoises, les vainez gloires de cest monde sont anemis d'omme, et aussi la char, qui convoite les delices de la char, des boires, des viandes, e[s]t aussi anemie d'omme. Et pour ce a Dieu armé homme des dis commandemens pour soy deffendre et garantir de ses anemis, aussi comme il a donne au cerf dis cornes pour soi deffendre et garantir de ses anemis.

Aprés est demoustré u cerf espurgatoire et vie pardurable. Dieu a donné une vertu a cerf que de son sans il se rajannie et vit si longuement que c'est la plus vieile beste qui soit, et quant il est si viel que il ne peut plus, sa nature li donne de querre une fourmiliere, ou il a dessous une coulleuvre blanche, si grate et espart tant la fourmiliere que la treuve, puis la tue du pié et la transgloutist tout entiere; puis s'enfuit en un desert nient habitable, et est aussi comme mort et giete sa char et son cuir, et devient joane de quatre ans ou de cinc. Et ainssi se ragannie le cerf, et demoustre espurgatoire en ce que il mue sa char. A ceste

similitude doit homme soy regannier et edifier espurgatoire: quant homme a longuement vesqu, il doit aler querre la couleuvre a la fourmilliere et la doit grater et la despartir; je entant par la formiliere les fleurins et les tresors que le homme assamble, pour quoi il les doit grater et departir aus povres et randre chen qu'il doit; et dessous il treuve une couleuvre, c'est couvetise, laquelle il doit mestre souz le pié et la tuer et transgloutir, c'est que on doit pestre les povres, qui la doivent mengier; et doir fuir de la fourmilliere u desert nient habitable, c'est que homme doit fuir le monde. Et ainssi jetera sa char, c'est que l'ame jetera le corps hors d'avesques soi, et ira en espurgatoire et après en vie pardurable, joane de trente deus ans.

Ainssi vous ai moustré comment homme doit prendre essamble et doutrine a la nature et propriété du cerf.

Appendix C

Les Livres du Roy Modus et de la Royne Ratio

Section 76: Ci devise les propriétés du sainglier

La premiere propriété qui est u sainglier est que il est noir et herichié. Aussi puis je dire que gens qui par leurs pechiés perdent la lumiere esperituel et ont fichiés leur ceurs es choses terraines sont noirs, herichiés et tenebrés, et de ceste condicion sont moult de gens qui regnent au temps present, car leur pensees tesretres **ocupent les** lumieres espreitueles, pour quoi je puis dire que tieus gens qui sont noirs et herichiés et orribles comme le sainglier. La seconde propriété du sainglier est que il est fel et yreus, et de ceste condicion sont mont de gens en ceste monde, ou il n'a ne charité ne humilité, ainz sont plains de vices et de pechiés. Et en tiex accidens est nourrie ire et felonnie, par quoi charité et humilité sont destruis, qui engendrent tout bien commun. La tierce propriété qui est u sainglier est que il est orgelleus, et par son orguel il rechoit la mort, que il ne daigne fuir devant les chiens, ains les atant, par quoi il est ochis et tué. Ainsi est il des gens qui ore sont, qui sont si orgueilleus qu'i atendent les diables et ne se veulent confesser, et les diables leur courent sus, qui les chassent et les demainent tellement de pechié en pechié qu'il sont ochis et mors de la mort esperituele par leur orguel. La quarte propriété du sainglier est que il est grant batailleur et court sus legierement aus gens, a chiens, a chevaux quant il est eschaufé, par quoi il pourchasse sa mort. Ainsi est il des gens qui

ore sont en cest monde, quer il sont si plains d'ire et si vuis de raison que pour petite acheson courent sus les uns aus autres, par quoi mort ensieut souvent. La quinte proprieté du sainglier est que il est armé de deus dans qui sont en sa geule, qui sont semblabes et de la fachon aus coutiaus que l'en porte maintenant qui sont apelés dagues, de quoi il fiert et se combat; et aussi font les gens qui sont batailluers: portent tiex coutiaus, de quoi il fierent et se combatent legierement quant il partent de la taverne en lieu de graces. La sisième proprieté du sainglier est que il a tous jours la teste en terre; aussi ont les gens du tamps present, car il ont si le ceur et leur pensees fichieez es choses terraines que du tout entroublient les choses esperituelles, et ne regrassient ne ne loent Dieu de bien qui leur viegne. La setieme proprieté qui est u sainglier est que il foille tous jours en terre; ainsi font les gens du temps present, qui foullent et quierent les delices terrains, comme bons vins et bonnes viandes, cointisez, delices de char, et cuident que il ne soit d'autre paradis. Le huitieme proprieté qui est u sainglier est que il se toulle volentiers en la boe; aussi font les gens qui ore sont, quer, quant il ont eu et receu des bens terrians et des delis a leur volenté, il n'en loent ne ne gracient celui dont tout leur vient, mes le metent et empleent u servise Antecrist, qui n'est que boe et ordure ou il se toullent et vantroullent. La neuvieme proprieté du sainglier est que ses piés devant et derriere font la pigache, c'est que l'un orteil passe l'autre. Ytelz sont les orteus des piés des gens qui ore sont, quer il font orteus de boure qui passe demi pié les orteus de nature,

et teiux orteus apelent poullaine, c'est la fachon des piés Antecrist; et, avec cen, il font poiterine de coton. Il monstrent que Dieu, quant il fourma homme, ne le fist mie tel comme il le deust avoir fait, ne li meism(i)es, qui prist nostre fourme, ne sout que il fist quant il n'out la poulaine. Ytielz gens qui se font d'autre fachon que Dieu ne les fourma sont des disciples Antecrist. Le disieme propriété qui est u sainglier est que, quant il a partout fouillé et mengiê et toullié et il se veut reposer il fait son lit en terre bien en parfont. Ceste propriété si demoustre la fin, quer, quant homme a esté en ce monde un poi de tans et il s'est toullié et vantroullié es vaines gloires et es delites de cest monde, il faut que le corps soit mis en terre bien en parfont pour soi reposer avecques les vers qui le mengeront, et la povre d'arme ira en gloire Antecrist u puis d'enfer.

Ce sont deus opositez que la loi Jhesu Crist et la loi Antecrist, ou nul moien ne peut estre trouvé, quer du tout il faut laisser la loy Antecrist et tenir la loi Jhesu Crist qui veut avoir la joie pardurable. Et pour veoir comment il sont contraires, la joie pardurable qui vient de Jhesu Crist est evoiee avec lumiere resplendent de tous desirs acomplissant, et n'est nul qui peust dire ne penser la grant joie qui vient de lui. La joie qui vient de tenir la loy Antecrist est de gaindre, de crier, de plourer en teniebres, en ire, en gemissemens sans avoir jamés miex. En cest monde en la maison de Jhesu Crist sont fais de biaux miracles: sa maison est l'iglise, quer ceulz qui goute ne voient, se il vont en l'iglise en bonne devocion, il s'en vont enluminez, et quant ceulz qui

n'oent goute s'en partent, il oent bien cler, et ceulz qui ne peuvent aler en partent et s'en vont tous drois. Antecrist fait ses miracles en sa maison tout au contraire. La maison Antecrist est la taverne: quant ceulz qui voient bien cler i(1) viennent il s'en partent tous aveugles, quant ceulz qui bien parlent en yssent, il ne peuvent aler, quant ceulz qui bien parlent en yssent, il ne peuvent parler. En la taverne sont faites les meslees, en (1)eglise sont faites les pes; l'en va en (1'eg)lise pour sourer et en la taverne pour maugreer. Cheulz qui ont perdu le sens le receuvrent en l'eglise; ceus qui sont sages et de bonne memoire sont folz et desordenez au partir de la taverne. Ainssi sont contraires les euvres Antecrist aus euvres Jhesu Crist.

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